

# HOW TO PRODUCE CHILDREN'S PLAYS

BY

CONSTANCE DAEY MACKAY

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BY

CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

*Author of "The House of the Heart," "The Silver  
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and the Historical Pageants of  
Schenectady and Portland*



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## PREFACE

THIS book is intended to be a guide-post on the road that leads to the adequate producing of plays for children. For that reason it includes a history of the children's play movement, a chapter on its sociological aspects and suggestions for new fields, as well as chapters on play-producing, scenery, costumes, and properties. It also gives a full list of plays adapted to the public schools, arranged according to the school grades, and a bibliography of child-drama for special holidays, and for camp and settlement use. Portions of this book have appeared in the following magazines and newspapers, to whom thanks are due for permission to republish: *The Survey*, *The Normal Instructor*, *The Playground*, *The Popular Educator*, *Primary Education*, *The New York Sun*, and *Educational Dramatics*.





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# HOW TO PRODUCE CHILDREN'S PLAYS



## I

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILD- DRAMA

To anyone not familiar with the astonishingly rapid growth of the child-drama movement in this country the slogan of "*Every Public School a Community Theater*" will come as a distinct surprise: yet it is not long since President Emeritus Charles Eliot of Harvard, in speaking of the dramatic instinct, prophetically said: "*Here is this tremendous power over children . . . that ought to be utilized for their good. It is true that the dramatic instinct is very general. . . . So I say that this power . . . is one that ought to be in at least every school in this country, and, moreover, I believe that it is going to be.*"

On every side it is evident that this prophecy is being fulfilled. The demand for children's plays was never so great as it is to-day, and coincident with the demand is a wish for a fuller knowledge of how to direct them, since there are few guide-posts on the way. Therefore, the object of this book is to tell in the simplest possible manner what to do, and what not to do in the producing of plays for children. The word children is used to indicate the happy occupants of the

years between six and fourteen, and by producing, the general stage-directing, costuming, and setting of a children's play, so that it will have distinct educational and artistic value. It is for the school-child, not the stage-child, that this book is intended: for the teacher and drama enthusiast rather than the professional producer. It will consider both child-audience and child-player, and the results on both of a logical development of the dramatic instinct. It will discuss plays to fill the special needs of the public school, the social settlement, and the camp. It will also briefly consider the stage-play (i.e., professional play) for child-audiences. And as the whole movement of child-drama is significant from an educational and sociological, as well as a dramatic point of view, a brief history of its vicissitudes will be included in the present chapter—from the days when little Greeks participated in the festivals to Athena, through the time when the Countess de Genlis established in France, in 1776, the first Theater of Education for Children that the world had ever known. From that time to our own is less than a hundred and fifty years, yet what a change has taken place! Instead of a single example of a children's theater as was that of Mme. de Genlis, we now have child-plays and child-players throughout the country in public schools, social centers, and social settlements, fostered by educational and dramatic leagues, recognized as a power potent for good, and if rightly directed, a means of teaching patriotism, ethics, and art.

Strange as it may seem, a children's play written

for the special delight of child-audiences was undreamed of till the eighteenth century preached the rights of the child as well as the rights of man. Like many another modern movement, child-drama seems new, when in reality it is not. It has come gropingly up through the ages. The need of it was dimly felt centuries before it appeared, just as the need for children's literature and music was felt: but in the filling of these needs child-drama came last. Its development has been tidal, rising here, falling there, seeming to retreat utterly, only to come on in greater strength and fullness.

From the earliest times children have participated in non-professional *adult* drama, though it was not till the establishment of the theater of Mme. de Genlis that they had a drama all their own, designed to fit their special needs. In the religious and community festivals of ancient Greece, white-robed and flower-crowned children played a pictorial part. In the great historical dramas of Greece, notably in the *Medea* of Euripides, there were child parts; but these were played by masked adults of small stature. Children of shepherds and farmers appeared in the ritual before Pomona's altar; boys of noble birth, crowned with vine leaves, were cup-bearers to the chorus of nobles in the Thargelian festivals. Little Britons took part in and witnessed some of the Druidic festivals. From the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries in the English miracle and morality plays fostered by church, community, and guild, children played many rôles. In the

fifteenth century in England short plays were introduced into the public schools for boys. But these dramas were arranged to be played before adult audiences: child-player and child-audience were never considered.

Herein lies the difference between the ancient and modern play movement in the schools. Nowadays the benefit to be derived by child-player and child-audience is the first consideration: in the fifteenth century the pleasure of the adult audience was the foremost thought. Whether the child-player benefited by the play, or even understood what it was about, was of no consequence. All that was asked of him was to learn his lines, parrot-wise, and be prompt with his cues.

Richard the Third was a patron of the drama: his royal example led to a love of acting by gentleman amateurs. "To the same example," says Dr. Doran, in his *Annals of the Stage*, "may be traced the custom of having dramatic performances in the public schools, the pupils being the performers. These boys, or in their place the children of the Chapel Royal, were frequently summoned to play in the presence of the King and Court." Boys gave a "command performance" of a play in Latin before Henry the Eighth and his attendants; and in 1584 the children of the Chapel Royal presented *The Arraignment of Paris*, by George Peele, before Queen Elizabeth.

Though there were extant no plays especially written for children, the miracle and morality plays were so naïve, so direct and simple in their appeal, that they



were the nearest approach to child-drama of any of their predecessors. Written primarily for adults, they told their story with definitely labeled characters that could be understood by all. Anger, Meddlesome, and Makepeace could be readily recognized by children. Noah's wife, who is quarrelsome and refuses to go into the ark; the bluff humor of the shepherd who steals a sheep, hides it in a cradle, and pretends it is a baby when its owner comes to look for it—no doubt many a rosy-cheeked youngster in doublet-and-hose laughed gleefully at such antics. Yet there were other characters it might be as well he did not see—grim skeletons representing death, black dream-haunting devils and carnal vices—creatures that had no part in his child-world. But, as has been said, in those days there was no drama for children, and whatever child happened to be in the audience must perforce take bitter with the sweet.

The Miracle play was the Sunday school of its time, and Bible history was learned through actual representation. The pageant, passing through the English towns on painted floats, drew crowds of children to witness its open-air performances. Bands of strolling players had child-auditors by the score. (See the first act of Josephine Peabody's *The Piper* and Bennet's *Young Master Skylark*.) Of these plays the children appropriated what they could and left the rest. In the processional and decorative portions of the masque as it flourished in France and England, children also appeared, though there was often little in that form of dramatic entertainment that they could

understand. In "far Japan" the plays of the *No* were flourishing, with occasional child-parts; in Italy were the guild plays, with rôles for little apprentices; everywhere appreciation of the heart of childhood, and nowhere any direct appeal to it. Children must take their drama at haphazard.

With the opening of the London theaters which gave the English drama a local habitation and a name, the decline of community drama \* began. For a short time they flourished side by side; then professional drama gained the ascendancy. Not that there was ever any real rivalry between them. It was simply that drama was becoming more and more strictly an art of the theater, to be encompassed within four walls. Stripplings were acting the parts of fine ladies or children. The day of the child-actor had begun, and with it the day of the child-player † ceased. It is a noticeable phenomena that the age which sees the greatest number of children acting professionally sees also the diminishing of community acting or spontaneous expression of the dramatic instinct among children. To the present writer it seems as if the exploitation of childhood and the commercialization of its tender talents was a subtle weed which choked the flower of uncommercial talent. They cannot flourish in the same soil. The development of the dramatic instinct in the school-room with proper hours and surroundings is one thing;

\* Drama by the people.

† Child-player is used to denote one who plays for pleasure; child-actor, one who plays for profit.

child-actors traveling from place to place in an atmosphere of over-excitement and fatigue is another.\*

The attendance of children at the indoor theaters of Shakespeare's day was very small. The audience was mainly composed of grown-ups. Not a thousandth part of the children then knew *Midsummer Night's Dream* as they know it to-day. Yet the fairy portions of it sound as if they had been written for children:

“And I serve the fairy queen  
To dew her orbs upon the green.  
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:  
In their gold coats spots you see;  
These be rubies, fairy favors,  
In those freckles live their savors:  
I must go seek some dewdrops here,  
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.”

Here was an elfin fantasy for children and no child-audience to greet it!

With community drama diminishing, two sources of participation for children remained: May Day, and its May Queen and Morris Dancers, its bells and garlands; Christmas Day, and its antique revels. While these festivals lasted children could count on being audience and participators too, though these were festivals rather than plays.

\*It is only fair to state that this is the author's opinion, and that others differ from it. Such well-known professionals as Mr. Augustus Thomas and Mr. Francis Wilson believe in children acting professionally, while Miss Jane Addams and Mr. Owen Lovejoy, Secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, hold to the opposite.

Came Cromwell and the closing of the theaters, the cessation of May Day mumming: then the gay, dissolute days of the Restoration, when no theater contained a play that was fit for children to witness. Community drama, that is, drama in which the people themselves took part as in the old miracles and moralities, had utterly vanished, not to return until our own day.

The annals of eighteenth-century England contain almost no records of amateur acting by children, though a performance of *Cato* (!) by the children of the royal household has been duly chronicled. Prince George, afterwards George the Third, spoke the prologue; the epilogue was spoken by little Lady Augusta (as Prince Frederick called his daughter) and Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of York. Whatever school-plays were given were of this same order, pompous, grandiloquent, without a spark of the fantasy childhood craved. Yet for the child-audience better times were in store. However meager child-drama in eighteenth-century England, however unimaginative the time, it did give one perennial figure to the stage that was to open the door to child-audiences—i.e., *Pantaloön*: a figure imported by Rich from the *Commedia del Arte* of Italy for the express purpose of amusing grown-ups. This Pantaloön did, in company with Harlequin, Columbine, and Punchinello, for many years. Then by degrees he came into his own true kingdom as the leading figure in the Christmas pantomimes which from about 1809 became the heritage of English chil-

dren, and have remained so to the present day. *Pantaloön* was the father of the circus clown as we know him; just as *Punchinello* was the ancestor of *Punch*, chief actor in the puppet show of *Punch and Judy*, which our ancestors accepted without a qualm as being suitable for child-audiences. Nowadays the horror and cruelty of *Punch* are no longer considered amusing. He is banished. And with him much that is brutal and ugly.

In the other European countries the participation of child-audience and child-player fluctuated as it did in England. Little apprentices took part in the Guild Plays of the Italian cities: Holland, Germany, and France had their periods of community drama corresponding to that of the miracle and morality plays: there were folk and church festivals in which children participated. These grew fewer as the stage-plays grew more numerous. The continent abounded in puppet-shows long before England had them, but the stories they acted were not for children's eyes or ears.

In the convents and schools of France children played in "moral comedies" that were as stiff as *Cato*, and like *Cato*, primarily intended for older pupils. Then in the days of Marie Antoinette and the "intellectual ferment" came the most dynamic change that child-drama had ever known. The long urge for plays designed to fit the needs of children at last found an answer.

We who live in the twentieth century, who see all

about us children's reading-rooms, children's courts, and children's hospitals; who are accustomed to books, pictures, and music designed especially for children, can hardly realize that there was a time when these things did not exist. But when the educational doctrines of Rousseau startled Europe people were shaken from a lethargy, made to think, to regard the child individually instead of collectively, to realize that childhood had claims of its own.

Among those who profited by Rousseau's theories was the Countess de Genlis, herself a born teacher, a pioneer blazing new trails. She studied the intellectual and spiritual needs of children, and in her searching presently realized that no plays had been written with a child-audience in view, that there was not a single drama, with the exception of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* (then seldom given), that could give delight to child-audiences. Therefore, the Countess de Genlis, greatly influenced by Rousseau's *Emile, or Treatise on Education*, established on her estate, at the Château de Genlis, a Theater of Education for Children (1776-1780). Here the De Genlis children acted plays written by their far-seeing and gifted mother, who believed that through the wise cultivation of the dramatic instinct children could be taught not only such lessons of language and history as education demanded, but the "elementary lessons of life,"—things of the heart and spirit not contained in textbooks. Thus the very first plays ever written for children came to be acted.

The Theater of Education was a rustic one, something in the style of that at the Little Trianon. It had a stage and seats, blue sky for a roof, splendid trees for a background, and sunshine for footlights. In a little play called *The Dove* the tyranny of dress was satirized. Another play dealt with the "annals of virtue." Perhaps nowadays we would consider them a little stiff and formal; but we must remember that they were written in a stiff and formal time, and that child-players and child-audience alike found delight in them.

The Theater of Education for Children and the results obtained there attracted the notice of the Electress of Saxony, and Mme. de Genlis therewith became instructress to the children of the Duc and Duchesse de Chartres, employing the same methods (i.e., the educational influence of the theater) as she had with her own. History plays were given as a means of teaching history: the child-players took part in small civic processions, riding on gayly caparisoned ponies. How much further this influence might have gone we have no means of determining, for the actual and terrible drama of the French Revolution began, and its coming rang down the curtain on the first experiment in plays for children. Thereafter there was a lull. Berquin wrote some playlets for children that, as one critic has termed them, "were so moral that they were immoral." Then there was a return to the same type of adult plays for children that had flourished before. But true child-drama was not dead: it was, like the

Princess in the fairy tale, only waiting to be awakened again at the right time.

## II

As has been said, the early nineteenth century developed the Christmas pantomime in England, to the great delight of child-audiences. In the mid-nineteenth century the child again came forward as participator. An operetta for children appeared on the horizon in the form of incidents from *Mother Goose*, loosely strung together, and containing such popular characters as Little Boy Blue, Miss Muffet, The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe, and Mother Goose herself. This operetta was purely a community production—a kind of folk-play, if one might call it so, acted by the children of whatever community happened to give it. Its author's name is lost in oblivion—if it ever had an author; but one somehow believes that, like Topsy, it “just grew.” It was popular alike in England and America: it was healthy, innocent, child-like. The sleeping Princess was waking!

*Pinafore* was long regarded as an opera to which one might take children, though the whimsicality of its humor was far beyond them; and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was another play to which children were taken, though slave whips and tragic deaths are not now deemed wise entertainment for children.

For a long while these three plays were the only drama for children that America had. Puritan times



had frowned on the child-player: Colonial days were too stressful to think of child-drama, and the next decade too poor, too fraught with the rigors of adjustment.

Fashions in drama change, as do all fashions, and if a sturdier idea of boyhood makes Little Lord Fauntleroy seem a trifle too "girlish" for us now, he was in his day a charming, buoyant figure, bringing with him a sense of wholesome reality that showed up *Rollo*, *Sandford and Merton*, and the children in *Elsie*, *Queechy*, and the *Wide, Wide World*, for the artificial, goody-goody creatures that they were. *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *Dearest* ended the reign of literature known as "the didactic school for children" and began a dynasty of normal books and stage-plays for young folks. Little Lord Fauntleroy was the hero of the first professional play designed for children, and he appealed to young and old alike, opening the way for the production of other stage-plays designed for children,\* such as *Prince and Pauper*, *Editha's Burglar* and *The Little Princess*, which delighted child-audiences all over the country and are in use to-day in amateur dramatic clubs.

In the public schools (grade schools), with the exception of a few crude attempts at drama, "piece speaking" was still the only use to which the dramatic instinct was put. Children galloped with Paul Revere,

\* The idea that adults could play children's parts, as Miss Maude Adams does now in *Peter Pan*, had not then occurred.

or hung breathless from the window with Barbara Fritchie by word of mouth. They never acted.

The social settlements\* were the first to recognize the need for children's plays, and put on home-made versions of *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, and *The Three Bears*. These early productions were not up to the standard set to-day, but they served their purpose and their time. They were the forerunners of the work that is now being done. Among the private schools of this country the School of Ethical Culture in New York City is a most significant pioneer in play and festival work, setting a standard for the latter that other schools would do well to emulate.

In 1903 a Children's Theater, under the direction of Mrs. Nettie Greenleaf, was established in Boston, on Huntington Avenue, near the public library. It gave matinées only: its actors were drawn from the Dorothy Dix Home for Stage Children—that is, the children of actors and actresses who were on the road and could not have their little folk with them. The children went to school, like every other normal child, and rehearsed in the late afternoon at about the same hour that other children were practicing five-finger exercises. The director adhered to the principle of giving two short one-act plays with separate casts rather than a long play, which might prove fatiguing to the young (often very young!) actors. As most of the children planned to enter the same profession as their fathers and mothers when they reached mature years, the

\* About 1892.

afternoon performances of the Children's Theater were simply an exercise in dramatic art for those taking part. The plays given were largely of the type then produced by the social settlements—*Cinderella* and *The Conquest of Santa Claus*, etc., the only plays available on a small royalty. They had no especial beauty or ethical quality, but they were the best that could be had. The theater was always well patronized, but was condemned by the authorities as being unsafe (after the Iroquois fire in Chicago caused better fire protection), and was forced to close its doors.

Also in 1903 in the building owned by the Educational Alliance, New York City, was started The Children's Theater. It was founded by Miss Alice Minnie Herts, and its dramatic director was Mrs. Emma Sheridan Fry. The work of the theater was along broadly educational lines. Thus the idea that the Countess de Genlis had established a century and more before was made significant in America.

This theater was situated in the heart of New York's East Side. Its players were drawn from the surrounding neighborhood, its audiences likewise. The ages of those participating in the plays ran all the way from eight or nine to the early twenties. The plays were carefully chosen, with the needs of audience and players in mind. *The Tempest* was the first play produced: this was followed by *Ingomar*, *As You Like It*, and *The Fairy Ring*. Then came other plays: *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *Snow White*, *The Little Princess*, *Prince and Pauper*, *Editha's Burglar*, and a number of

one-act pieces, including *A Comedie Royal*, *The End of the Way*, and *The House of the Heart*. The theater was always well attended. Its rate of admission was low, and its performances were of undoubted benefit to the community, for children in that neighborhood had little else than tawdry moving-picture shows as their means of recreation, as the licensing board of the "movies" was not then extant. There were three performances a week, and since the neighborhood was largely Hebrew, matinées were given on Sundays. Very often a lecturer would explain the plays in the tongue spoken by the fathers and mothers of the children. This led to a general appreciation of what was being acted. The theater closed in 1909, and after an interval a group of young people, incorporated under the name of The Educational Players, began to carry on the same principles of educational acting that were developed by Mrs. Fry for the Children's Theater.

But between the closing of this theater and the incorporation of The Educational Players, a significant thing had occurred: plays frankly and avowedly for the public schools had been written, and published. That meant that the drama was not to be confined to whatever spot happened to have a children's theater, isolated from the rest of the vast city, separated by stern walls of carfare that prohibited many children from going, even if they had the price of admission. The play in the public school meant plays for the children of every district: not only that, but *it meant that the plays were to be given free*. No admittance fee

was to be charged. Moreover, no royalty was to be required for the plays. They were to be acted by amateurs without payment of any kind. They began to be acted in the public schools: sometimes the performances given were good; sometimes they contained much misdirected effort. But always it *was* effort, a reaching toward the goal. The demand for plays was so great that the use of the school auditoriums for school drama began. It was coeval with the growing demand for recreation centers.

In 1911, the Educational Players began to work in connection with the public schools; but as the Players were not children, but young men and women, they had children for audience rather than as co-players. Occasionally, however, they co-operated, as exemplified in their excellent school production of *The Little Princess*, and a performance of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which young people employed in stores and factories played the parts of Titania, Lysander, and Hermia, while school children acted Peasblossom, Mustardseed, and the rest of the fairies. The play was admirably managed from all points of view. The adults and children rehearsed separately, the former in the evening, the latter in the afternoon. Only at the final rehearsals did they rehearse together. Although the performance was to be given indoors, the children's rehearsals were conducted out of doors, in Bronx Park. Thus the enchanted wood of the play seemed wonderfully real to them, and they were imbibing dramatic instruction and fresh air at the same time!

Feeling the wide and still unfilled needs of schools and social centers for standardized dramatic work, the Educational Dramatic League was organized in January, 1913. (Mrs. August Belmont, President.) Its object was (and is) the promotion in Public Schools, Social Centers, Recreation and Civic Centers of Amateur Dramatic Performances having an educational value. Its object is national, not local. It stands ready to advise clubs and schools the country over. Its plans are both idealistic and utilitarian: for, while raising the standard of dramatic production, it calls for no new equipment, but only a better utilization of the material at hand. Youthful dramatic "clubs" have sprung up in schools and settlements, and the League works co-operatively with these, lending books of plays, histories of the drama, costume plates, costumes, and sets of screens for backgrounds for a very small sum. It also suggests leaders or teachers for the various clubs; and sustains a class that teaches teachers how to direct plays. Last year in New York City fifty-one teachers were registered members of the League. Twenty-five clubs came under the League's stimulating influence: there were twelve associate clubs, and three classes in story-playing. And this after only a year's work!

The League actively co-operated with such associations as the Music School Settlement, the New York Kindergarten Association, the Gerry Society, Young Women's Christian Association, the Vacation Committee, the Camp Fire Girls, the Public Schools, the

Recreation Centers, and many Settlements. It was found that the ages of those wishing to enroll with the League ranged all the way from eight to twenty-six, so Junior and Senior departments were formed. In order to bring about co-operation and promote a community spirit in these unrelated groups, a competition was organized, and a bronze tablet supplemented by a money prize was offered for the best performance. The tablet must be awarded three successive times to the same club in order to be permanently won. In the 1913 competition the play selected for the Juniors was *The House of the Heart*, and for the Seniors *Pygmalion and Galatea*. For the 1914 competition the Junior play is the first act of *The Little Princess*, and the Senior play Clyde Fitch's *Nathan Hale*. With the Juniors the greatest care is taken that no over-fatigue or excitement shall mar the performance. The League believes in early hours and short plays for children; in having plays throughout the city rather than in one district; and in having a high standard for the least thing done. The aims of the League are indorsed by such well-known authors as Edmond Rostand, Maurice Maeterlinck, Lady Gregory, Sir Arthur Pinero, Arnold Bennett, and John Galsworthy.

In all the highways and byways of the city life child-drama is making itself manifest. Story-telling in the New York Public Libraries has led to giving plays in the libraries. Usually the play is told in story form first, and acted afterwards. Outdoor plays have been given on recreation piers, and city

roofs, as well as in the sylvan reaches of the parks.

Educators find in the children's play a wonderful means of developing defectives. Plays are given by the deaf and dumb; also story pantomimes are acted by the latter. Blind children recently gave a one-act play in aid of the Lighthouse, a recreative center for the blind.

The church, which in medieval times first fostered the play movement, is now returning to its ancient belief in drama as a moral force. St. George's Church is particularly active in this direction, and has given some unique performances of *St. George and the Dragon*, the street in front of the church being closed to traffic while the play was in progress. A play given outdoors in a city street! *St. George and the Dragon* in the heart of New York City, pavements underfoot, city blocks on all sides, their windows crowded with the heads of spectators intent on seeing children act a medieval play! \*

Festival plays for children are given on some of the Jewish feast-days. Children's plays are given under the auspices of several of the Catholic churches. Performances by the Ben Greet Players (professional actors, not young people) have been given under the auspices of The Wage-Earners' Theater League in the school-yards of Manhattan. Performances by this com-

\* In this connection might be noted *Eager Heart*, a beautiful Christmas mystery play, produced by various communities throughout the country at the holiday season.



pany have also been given in the public school auditoriums at a price that put them within the reach of anyone. The Shakespeare Centenary, May, 1914, was celebrated not only by performances by this company, but by children's festivals in the parks, and public school performances by the Dramatic League and the Educational Players.

All this represents the work done in New York City; but all over the country the influence of child-drama is being felt. In Ohio, in 1911, Group Readings were introduced into the public schools through the pages of *The Normal Instructor*. A folk-play in three acts and five scenes (*The Silver Thread*) was studied in the schoolrooms. The play had a large cast, and each child was made responsible for whatever character he or she assumed. The scenes were laid in Cornwall, and everything connected with Cornish history and geography was diligently studied. This was the first time that Group Reading had ever been used in the public schools, and it proved extremely serviceable. It kept the children interested, their English improved through play-reading, the urge of the drama as it gathered impetus made for clearer enunciation. This method is now in use in many of the schools.

In Cincinnati the School of Expression conducts a Children's Theater, giving special performances every year, the students in the school taking part, and the school children of Cincinnati forming the audience. The little theater of Hull House, Chicago, gives splen-

did productions of children's plays; the social settlements of Boston, notably Lincoln House and South End House, are equally active along these lines. Under the auspices of the Boston Women's Educational and Industrial Union has been established an association called the Children's Players—a group of amateurs from college and private dramatic clubs, acting under the Union's management. Each year they present a play for children, generally during the Christmas holidays. It is staged in a local theater. Three performances are given, two matinées and a morning dress rehearsal. The matinées are played at the usual theater rates; at the morning performance the seats are placed within the range of the most slender pocket-book, so that children from all over the city can attend. A little theater called The House of Play, in Washington, D. C., regularly produces plays for children and young people, children forming both audience and player-guild. The theater is run under the auspices of the Drama League. Neighborhood House, a Washington Settlement, gives children's plays and festivals, the costumes of which are all designed, dyed, and made up at the settlement itself. The performances of the Ethical Culture School in New York have already been mentioned. All the settlements in New York have departments of child-drama, including the University Settlement, Greenwich House (which gives a Children's Festival every year), and the Henry Street Settlement, where splendid work is done under the direction of the Misses Lewisohn.

The ten settlements of Brooklyn, N. Y., united in 1911 in giving in Prospect Park *The Pageant of Patriots*, the first children's historical pageant ever given in America. It does not rightly belong under the heading of plays, save that each episode in the pageant was written in a play form, which made it possible to detach it from the whole pageant and give it separately. This pageant dealt with the youth of American heroes and depicted scenes from the lives of Daniel Boone, Franklin, Washington, and Lincoln before an audience of ten thousand people. Up to that time the settlements had carried on their dramatic work separately, but the pageant drew them all together to work for a common cause. Each settlement took an episode in the pageant, and after the pageant was over these episodes were repeated by some of the settlements in their own districts. Later this pageant was given for the "Safe and Sane Fourth" of Boston and other cities.

During the week of June 7, 1914, a *Festival and Pageant of Nations* was produced in New York City under the auspices and guidance of The People's Institute and Social Center Public School 63. Every afternoon and evening during the entire week singing, dancing, and drills took place in a huge cleared space running from Eleventh to Twelfth Street, and from Avenue A to First Avenue. The culmination of the pageant was marked by a beautiful symbolical idea of the different nations bringing to Columbia gifts that typified their chief arts and industries. Everywhere

was life, movement, color. Italians marching under their gay banners, Jews with the blue and white flag of Zion, Hungarians, Russians, Poles, Galicians, Germans, and Norwegians—all in folk-costume. Two thousand children and one thousand grown-ups participated in the pageant before an audience of about twenty thousand people. It brought about a tremendous stimulation of race pride and race intelligence. Besides this children are participating in all the adult historical pageants that are lending to our own time something of the glory of medieval days, pageants that give the youth of our country a clear idea of the development of both national and community history. As little Puritans, Indians, Colonials, and Pioneers, children have greatly added to the effectiveness of the Pageants of Peterboro, Deerfield, Schenectady, Arlington, Thetford, Westchester, Portland, and others. As in the old days, they are now participating in Masques, in the St. Gaudens Masque, The Bird Masque, The Masque of St. Louis, in the Allegory given on the steps of the Treasury in Washington, D. C.

The Drama League, established for the furtherance of the best plays, has branches in all the large cities and towns, and maintains a Junior Department which issues pamphlets listing available plays for children. It also supplies lecturers on child-drama.

Meantime, in the professional theaters, the charm of *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, and the delicate fantasy of such plays as *Snow White*, *Peter Pan*, and *The*

*Blue Bird*, have given such children as were fortunate enough to see them much of the material of dreams.

*The Blue Bird* and *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* were both produced in England, where, partly due to the rise of the Historical Pageant movement, plays for children received a sudden impetus. They are not yet used educationally as in America, but undoubtedly they will be in time. The social settlements of England are active in producing children's plays, notably Toynbee Hall, London, where the first children's Pageant of English History, by Louis N. Parker, was given in 1910. A collection of English history plays are published, and their amateur performance furthered by the "League of the Empire." These plays deal with the heroes of English history, with Alfred, Richard Cœur de Lion, bluff King Hal, the Black Prince, Robin Hood, and so on; and inculcate patriotism, not only in Merrie England, but in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and India, wherever child-players of the empire are. "The Guild of Play" strives to conserve the national folk-dances and festivals: it collects and publishes these, as well as music and costume plates. The Bermondsey Guild of Play-children took an important part in the great English Church Pageant of 1909. The Village Children's Historical Play Society was founded in Winchelsea in 1910. As its title indicates, it gives historical plays. The productions are of a high standard, dramatically and artistically. *Ludlow Castle*, a play by the Hon. Mrs. Percy Mathewson, was given this year. The

very beautiful costumes were designed by Edith Craig. In Ireland, largely due to the influence of the Irish Theater, poetic plays of Irish history are given in the boys' schools, with a beauty and simplicity of effect such as we have come to associate with the performances of the Irish Players.

In the other countries of Europe, in the spontaneous Italian festivals, in German pageants similar to that of Rothenburg, in the children's festivals given at Versailles, at the performances of the Instituto Internationale in Spain, everywhere the child-drama movement is slowly yet surely coming into its own, though by far the greatest strides have been made by America and England—indeed, in the respect of utilizing drama as an educational force in its public schools, America may be said to lead the world.

The child-drama movement is only a part of the whole great movement of recreative art made manifest on all sides through pageantry, festival, and the masque—a movement reaching toward that “redemption of leisure” set forth so glowingly in the *Civic Theater*. By strange roads and ways, with many backward turnings and cessations, and again with the rush of forced marches, has the children's play movement gone forward. Much has been done. Much is yet to do. But that it *will* be done who can question?

## II

### CHILD-PLAYER AND CHILD-AUDIENCE

ONE of the first questions that arise in dealing with plays for children is: *Why should there be plays for children at all?* What claim have they on drama? Why are children's plays now given in all our school-houses, settlements, camps, and recreation centers? Yet one does not have to look far for the answer. It is written in the eager, vivid faces of children waiting outside the "nickel arcades" in our great cities; it is sometimes stamped on the heavy, uninspired countenances of country children who have "never had a chance," for whom the imaginative life is a closed book. The former are avid in their quest for the stuff that is the substance of dreams; the latter do not know that the stuff exists. The needs of each are so vital and imperative that it is hard to determine which requires guidance most.

In *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, Jane Addams has shown us, with crystal clearness, a picture of "a group of children and young people emerging from a theater with the magic of the play still thick upon them." They have been for hours in their

"veritable house of dreams"; now once again they face the world of actuality. If they belong to the rank and file of everyday, has what they witnessed in "the house of dreams" brought something beautiful and glamorous into the harsh realities of their daily lives? Has it given them something of inner strength with which to meet the actualities? For to-day we know it is not only the work or study hours of the individual that are important: we have come to realize that the leisure hours are equally significant, equally fraught with redemption or menace. We know that in an age of abnormal commercialism one of the chief needs is the freeing of the imagination. Age resigns its dreams; youth demands that its dreams be fulfilled, it urges that the gray of life be shot with the iridescence of the heroic and wonderful. Above all, it demands action, and it is an incontestable fact that drama *is* action, that it makes a more dynamic appeal to all sorts and conditions than does any other art. It can both waken and guide. It appeals to all young people and children through the dramatic instinct, the instinct that strives to fulfill youth's dreams, that yearns to be heroic, wonderful, and different. To conserve this instinct and to turn it into the right channels is what the child-drama movement is trying to do by supplying adequate plays for children, and places in which to give the plays.

That this dramatic instinct is well-nigh universal goes almost without saying. There is a spark of the dramatic instinct in almost everyone, just as there is



a spark, though often obscured, of the poetic instinct. The poet is the seer, or se-er. Cultivate the dramatic instinct, and you waken the poetic. Vitalize the poetic, and you make people see. It is the people who see that have moved the world. Jane Addams is a poet working in terms of humanity; Galileo was a poet working in terms of astronomy. Nations are judged, not by their natural resources or the wealth their citizens have, but by the human beings they produce. And the right use of the dramatic instinct tends to develop human beings. It can confidently be claimed for it that it is of benefit to the child-player, the child-audience, and the community at large. Let us consider them in turn.

### CHILD-PLAYER

In the first place, it must be made clear that the development of the dramatic instinct does not tend to make actors, but imaginative human beings. To study music in the schools does not necessarily mean that one must be a musician. Drawing is taught in all the schools, but that does not mean that every school-child is to become an artist. It is merely enlarging his horizon, adding to his store of knowledge, making him a more appreciative citizen. And this is precisely what the child-drama movement strives to do. It seeks to widen horizons mentally and ethically, to provide a fabric for dreams, since out of dreams, from time immemorial, has sprung achievement.

In all children there is a love of the beautiful and

heroic, though it is often hidden under layers of bashfulness, stultification, or seeming indifference. One has only to rouse the dormant dramatic instinct to find that this love is there. It exists equally in the Child-who-has-Too-Little and the Child-who-has-Too-Much. Give a farm-child a chance to be a young Minute Man, give a little newsboy, once in his life, a chance to be a hero; let an average little girl play she is a princess—a princess with sweet and gracious manners; let the Child-who-has-Too-Much become a little pioneer without luxuries who must make the most of everything that comes her way, and, under wise guidance, you have done something for all of them. You have given them the reaction of a new environment. The newsboy dropped the patois of the street to become the hero; the young Minute Man must hold himself erect; the little princess played with charm of manner; the youthful pioneer enlarged her vision. More than this: if the play has literary value, they have added to their vocabulary, stimulated their memories, and learned to express themselves. Clearness of enunciation has been gained; they have obtained a knowledge of team-work, of how necessary the effort of each individual is to the success of any undertaking. Moreover, if the play has any real value (and from the standpoint of Mme. de Genlis and all other workers in child dramatics this is the most important thing of all) they have gained an ethical lesson, a "criticism of life."

Says the bulletin of the Educational Dramatic

League: "We train the young in statistics, in how to work. Isn't it worth while to add to their training a little knowledge of that vital part of them—their emotions? Show them the point, the critical moment in which the villain of the play becomes villain, and how the same emotion which brought this about, differently handled, could have made him a hero." Thus countless lessons can be taught through child-drama. What was *The Blue Bird* but an inspired preachment that the humblest, humdrum things of life were often the most beautiful?

Give children a morality play to act, and they learn something of the effects of good and evil; give them a fairy play, and you have taken them into the country of the imagination; give them a nature play, and they grasp a knowledge of the world around them; while a history play makes them appreciate the valor and self-sacrifice that went to the upbuilding of our nation. This much the play can do for the child-player. It is an acknowledged fact. But it might do even more. For the average citizen life is filled with work and conflict, with a hundred setbacks and unexpected difficulties. Why not teach the child who is later to be the citizen to *live* dramatically, to *dramatize his difficulties*? It will give interest and color to life, and lend keen exhilaration to what otherwise might be a gray and discouraging existence. Poverty is a monster to be conquered. Discontent another. Failure another. Difficulty an antagonist to whom one must give deadly combat if one would succeed. Through the stimulus

of the dramatic instinct many a war might be won on the battleground of the spirit.

Vocational Guidance is a modern movement that could be greatly aided through drama—*real* drama, I mean, not the inner drama. Vocational Guidance should be dramatized. The trades and their demands, rewards, and opportunities could be clearly shown. Such plays would go far toward solving the problem of the misfit, the hopeless drifters that fill our cities. For surely one of the greatest tragedies of our American life is this very misfitness. There is no more calamitous figure than the youth who is drifting, who has not discovered what he wants of life, and no moment more filled with import than that in which he discovers what his goal is to be. Everyone knows the story of how the youthful Benjamin Franklin was taken by his father to see all the different trades, with tradesmen at work, so that he might actually visualize them, and make his choice of a lifework wisely and whole-heartedly. Plays for Vocational Guidance might do just this. *Remedial plays*, they might be called. They could also teach that it is never too late to make a fresh beginning, or to start anew. Endurance, Struggle, Courage, Hope, are all figures to stir the heart of youth, and they can be seen banishing the figures of Too-Late or Never-Never! The Ideal and the fight to attain it is not too difficult of comprehension for the schoolgirl or schoolboy in the higher grades, in those years when the thoughts of youth are "long, long thoughts." "Blessed is the man who has found

his work," says Carlyle, and the boy is father to him.

"But suppose that child-drama cultivates a love of acting," cries the extreme conservative. To which one can answer, "Is not amateur acting on a par with amateur music? Is not the child or adult entitled to 'imagination in recreation'?" The love of any art gives joy to its votary. Better the youth of the country expressing themselves through plays, festivals, and folk-dance than through street-corner lounging, dance halls, and billiard rooms in the cities, and inanity and gossip in the country towns. The golden days of Greece and the great days of Queen Elizabeth were play-acting epochs, and do not seem to have been the worse for it. It is true that there were no plays for children in the Elizabethan era, and it is a pity that there were not. But the children of that time did not need them as do the children of to-day. They were living in an imaginative age filled with balladry, festival, and story, with high adventure and marvelous discoveries on all sides. Life itself was a play, romantic and colorful. Compare the life of that time and the monotony of our dun city streets, a monotony against which youth is in continual revolt. If plays are not selected for children, in many instances they will select them for themselves. Mrs. Charles Israels says: "Most interesting is the change which has come over amateur dramatics in young people's organizations," and quotes the following instances:

"Twelve or thirteen years ago, when in charge of

all the entertainment work at the Educational Alliance (New York City), I came in contact with many boys' clubs with dramatic ambitions. Those were the palmy days of melodrama at the Third Avenue and the Bowery Theaters. As soon as a play was produced its story was printed in the evening papers with all the original dialogue merely connected by a sufficient number of 'he saids' and 'she saids.' These stories were clipped from the papers, pasted into blank-books, and became the script from which the play was rehearsed."

"Original plays were written to follow these models, and a typical programme offered would consist of a play or plays entitled:

*The Bandit's Revenge.*

*The Captain's Band.*

*Guilty, or the Pirate King's Reward.*

"We introduced new standards, and among the plays produced were a version of the courtroom scene in *Puddinhead Wilson*, *Men and Women*, and many home-made versions of fairy tales and children's verses, and stories."

To-day, through wise guidance, the same type of club may give, as did the boys of South End House, Boston, a production of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, which combines exciting incident and literary quality.

#### THE CHILD-AUDIENCE

Walt Whitman said, "To have great poets we must have great audiences." The children of to-day will be

the audience of to-morrow. To have great drama we must have great audiences. Train the dramatic instinct of the children of to-day, and the drama of to-morrow will be great drama because its audience will demand it. In all the schools children are taught the poetry of Stevenson and Longfellow in the hope that when they are older they will love not only Stevenson and Longfellow, but Shelley and Shakespeare. If it is worth while to train a child's literary taste, why is it not worth while to train his dramatic taste? Why is it not imperative to make him see the difference between true and false dramatic values, between the tawdry and the beautiful? Watch a child-audience rapt with the loveliness and surprise of *The Blue Bird*, or wide-eyed at the fairies in the treetops of *Peter Pan*. They have entered into their own world. It is as real to them as it is fantastic to us. "*Is this where the most beautiful princess in the world lives?*" asks a little girl, peering into the door of the Hull House Theater, or "*Does Alice in Wonderland always stay here?*"

The love of drama is so deep-rooted a human instinct that children have it as well as adults. All over the country, in city or in village, boys and girls are keenly anxious to "see a show," when an opportunity offers. If no professional plays for children, such as *Snow White* or *The Blue Bird*, happen to be available, they (the children) are taken to vaudeville or comic opera. They go, willingly enough. But of the heritage of childhood they receive nothing. They are given nothing that they can rightly understand.

In all the large cities children frequent the moving-picture shows, and since there are no Children's Moving-Picture Theaters the youthful audience is served a dish of lurid melodrama, comic supplement humor, or sundry comments on domestic felicity. Children are greatly influenced by what they see in these theaters. The night courts devoted to youthful culprits are filled with echoes of, "I seen it at the moving-picture show." Says an English playwright, "The theater is literally making the minds of our urban population to-day. It is a huge factory of sentiment, of character, of points of honor, of conceptions of conduct, of everything that finally determines the destiny of a nation. The theater is not only a place of amusement, it is a place of culture, a place where people learn to think, act, and feel." Especially is this true of the large cities. One has only to walk along Fourteenth Street near Union Square in New York to see hordes of drama-hungry youngsters gazing voraciously at the florid signs of the penny arcades and "gem-theaters." One longs to put a wholesome children's theater into this very spot with Robert Louis Stevenson's immortal—

"Come up here, oh dusty feet,  
Here is fairy bread to eat,"

painted in larger letters over the door. Dramas might be presented here that would send their child-audiences out into the dingy thoroughfare fortified with visions



of imaginative beauty. The players might be non-professional; the admittance fee within the reach of all. And it is an actual fact that children prefer the best in drama when it is given to them. They will desert cheap melodrama in favor of imaginative drama nine times out of ten; and it is a boon beyond estimate that they can have the auditoriums of the New York Public Schools in which to work out their plays, and in working, grow. Nothing is more needed than that our public schools should become our community theaters, the home of children's plays the country over.

### COMMUNITY BENEFIT

What of the fathers and mothers of the child-players? What of their older sisters and brothers? One of the greatest things the movement for children's plays has done is the way it has drawn people together. In country districts people come for miles to see the production of a children's play. But it is in the city that the greatest benefits are derived. A performance of one of Shakespeare's plays on the East Side, by a cast of young immigrants, resulted in arousing an interest in the fathers and mothers who could speak no English. The children explained the play to them. Cheap editions were bought and read. And presently work-worn parents who never stepped beyond their own thresholds after nightfall became suddenly eager to see what had so enthralled their children. Older brothers and sisters went "to find out what the young ones

were doing." It was a get-together time for the whole neighborhood, a time of family and community pride.

To quote again from the bulletin of The Educational Dramatic League, "To a vast number of people the theater is prohibitive in price, but with the players drawn from the 700,000 school children of New York, all the young wage-earners, and with the free use of the school auditoriums, good plays can be produced with practically no cost to the community. It will also bring into the lives of the fathers and mothers, as well as the young people, a wholesome and enjoyable social companionship. The work is being carried on largely in the congested districts, where the parents of the children have little time, and less money for amusements. The plays bring recreation nearer to them, with the added joy that their children are creating this means of pleasure." Other cities might follow this example.

All of the young players enrolled in the League, although they come from different parts of the city, genuinely and heartily co-operate with one another. If a special or trial performance is coming off, and illness of a player threatens to make production impossible, offers of assistance from other clubs who are rehearsing the same play are immediately made. They cheerfully and interestedly help one another, and are glad to substitute players, costumes, settings, and properties. This is the spirit that a great city needs. "So many young people come to New York to start life filled with the spirit of love of amusement, and from lack of

knowledge of where and how to obtain it form bad habits and make detrimental acquaintances; others who move from one community to another feel equally adrift." The League keeps a list of clubs in different neighborhoods, so as to be of assistance to those who wish to join a club in a given community. This might be done elsewhere, in many of our cities.

Dramatic clubs for children fostered in school or settlement carry their impetus far beyond school or settlement room. The Educational Dramatic League reports a benefit given by children for the Prison Association. Colored children, under a League director, produced a play in their own clubroom, once for their mothers, once for the children of the neighborhood. Then they went a-field and gave the play at the Lincoln Hospital for aged couples and the Colored Orphan Asylum. This is an idea containing distinct community benefit.

Our public schools as community theaters can be and should be a socializing force for player, for audience, for community at large. The more difficult the task, "the more," as Jane Addams says, "does the effort need help and direction, both in the development of its technique and the material of its themes. The few attempts that have been made in this direction are astonishingly rewarding to those who regard the power of self-expression as one of the most precious boons of education."

### III

## HOW TO PRODUCE CHILDREN'S PLAYS

THE director of a children's play stands to the children in the relation that the director of an orchestra does to his players. It is the business of the director of the orchestra to control and guide, to see that the violins shimmer and the 'cellos throb at the right moment. He must bring the utmost out of the players as individuals, and of the orchestra as a whole. He must interpret the symphony as the musician who wrote it intended it should be interpreted. This is also the task of the director of children's plays, who must bring out all the sweetness, the unconscious grace, and child-like charm of the child-players, and yet keep to the original purpose of the playwright. The director must know the play backward and forward, must recognize the points to be emphasized, and move toward the climax with a sharp or gradual crescendo as the play demands.

Every play, long or short, has its rhythm, just as music has. There is not only the rhythm of the whole play, but a rhythm for each act, and innumerable crescendos and diminuendos. These signs guide the

orchestra, and it is the greatest pity that there are no signs to guide the director of children's plays. If one could only say, "Fast here. Slow here. Wistful lightness here," and so on, what wonders might not be accomplished. The children's playwright could indicate *largo*, *presto*, and *grazioso* with a happy hand! But since no play signs exist, the director must gather as much as possible from a thorough reading of the text and play directions. One of the greatest faults of the average play given by amateurs, whether adults or children, is the slowness of its tempo. A remedy for this will be discussed later on.

The orchestra director may select a whole symphony, or a programme of short pieces. The play director may choose a long or a short children's play. If a short play is chosen, and only runs twenty minutes when you meant it to run half an hour, or when it runs twenty-five minutes when you meant it to run forty, do not lengthen it by devices of your own. Better a programme of two or even three one-act plays than that utter abomination, "a short play made long enough." Better something brief and exquisite than something long and patchy. We all know the type of dramatic entertainment that is "good in spots," like the unhappy curate's soft-boiled egg. A children's play is not a minstrel show. It does not need interpolations. To put in an "extra" dance or song often destroys its symmetry. You do not lengthen a sonatina by devices of your own; why lengthen a children's play? Trust the author. The chances are that if he

wrote the play he knows as much and perhaps even a little more than the producer who is directing it for the first time.

A good test of a play is its suitability for all occasions. Between a stage-play and a school play should lie only the difference of environment. A school play should contain such simple elemental dramatic values that, if suddenly transplanted to the stage, it would still retain them. A stage-play for child-audiences that cannot be stripped of its ornamental trappings without losing its charm for schoolroom audiences is fundamentally not a play for children. Jessie Braham White's version of *Snow White* as produced by Winthrop Ames is an example in point. With its beautifully simple scenery and costumes it was a delightful thing for children to see on the professional stage; yet read, not even acted in a New York schoolroom, it proved enthralling to an audience of children who had never seen it on the stage.

Of late years, since plays for children have become part of the school curriculum, standards of production are being raised. Plays for children are no longer chosen at haphazard. They must have a certain ethical and literary value. The time has come when child-drama is as carefully selected as children's music. The best music teachers will not tolerate trashy ragtime. The best producers of children's plays will not tolerate vapid drama and slovenly enunciation. Besides exercising more care in play selection, the world at large has come to realize that play-producing is an art in

itself, and play-producing for children a very delicate and subtle one. Child-drama should have lines as straight and delicate as a Boutet de Monvel painting. Everything should be naïve and simple, and yet the production should have the art which conceals art.

The first thing to do in producing a children's play is to ask yourself questions, and their answer will naturally help you to decide what sort of play you wish to undertake, long or short, simple or complex, though if children have never acted before, it is well to begin with a short one. Is it to be in the country or city? Indoors or out of doors? For a school or settlement? Is the cast to be large or small? All boys? All girls? Or girls and boys? Do you wish to produce the play for the sheer joy of doing something that will have artistic and educational value? Is it to celebrate some national holiday? Or is it part of a pedagogical scheme? Is it to be given as a means of raising money for some school or settlement? In which case you must perforce make a good showing, and give the kingliest boy the kingliest part. Or are you free to give the most round-shouldered boy the kingliest part to make him hold himself erect? Will it be possible to train two casts so that both kingly and round-shouldered boys can have a chance at it? For this is the ideal way. Always train two casts when possible. One supplements the other. Then, what sort of a play are you going to give? A modern play? A fairy play? An historical play, or a nature play?

If expensive, or the most inexpensive costumes are

out of the question, choose a modern play, and let the children wear their everyday clothes. A national holiday calls for a play that is appropriate to the time. If your players have been studying Lincoln, why not give a Lincoln play? A nature play suggests itself as fitted for a camp; a morality play is good for a guild, or for the Lenten season; while for almost all occasions, indoors or out, that hardy perennial, the fairy play, can be depended on. Emigrant and native-born children enjoy them equally. "Fairy tales," says Gilbert Chesterton, "are our only democratic institution: all the classes have read all the fairy tales."

While it is not always wise to leave the entire selection of a play to children, never force a play on them. They must have delight and pride in what they do or it avails them nothing. Take something suited to their environment and temperament. Above all, select something that is too difficult rather than something too easy: children despise what they feel is beneath their powers. For the "gang," eager for excitement, no quiet play will do: a rousing patriotic play, something that centers about a hero, or a play with Indians in it, makes a strong appeal to the gang spirit. Boy Scouts are keen for plays of the open: something that suggests the camp fire or the trail. For Camp Fire Girls, plays of Indian legends, or pioneer life are appropriate. Boys in a country school are also eager to act Indian or pioneer plays; while for country girls the fairy play is best to begin with. The country child lacks imagination. Country life is usually a life



of fact. There are no fairies out beneath the moon; no dryads in the trees; no river spirits in the brooks. Therefore, country children need fantastic plays. For emigrant children who speak little English, try a folk-play of their own nation, put into English words. It will give them an idea of the value of the arts of their own land. If their parents come to see it they can probably understand a part, at least, of what is going on, and it will be a bond drawing the family together. If, as sometimes happens, you have a group of girls of varying ages, the youngest seven, the oldest thirteen or fourteen, try a morality play in which the characters have no particular age, when they represent qualities rather than personalities. For a boys' or girls' camp use a nature play that will carry with it some knowledge of woodcraft or animal lore. For the settlement, the camp, or garden, a fairy play comes into use. It is also the best play to use for defectives. Plays with an outdoor setting should be produced in the tenement districts where the people-who-have-too-little forget what trees and grass look like, forget the beauty of forest-green.

Whatever play you select, be sure of three things: that it has literary quality, dramatic quality, and that it contains an idea. By literary quality is meant that the language should be poetic. There is no benefit in the memorizing of commonplace lines. By dramatic quality is meant that the play should have an interesting plot, with a climax. Lack of climax, or culminating point, is the lack of most children's plays. That

the play should contain an idea means that it should teach some dominant truth either subtly or openly. It may be either the great lesson of courage in adverse circumstances, or the simple lesson that happiness, like the Blue Bird, can be found at home.

The range of emotion in child-drama is, of course, restricted: such things as money-lust, power-lust, vice, social ambition, despair, or trickiness do not exist for normal children. They are beyond their range. Neither should children's plays contain love-making or sentiment. In acting such scenes they are merely aping emotions that they have never felt, and acting for children should be as direct and sincere as it is possible to make it. It should carry with it a distinct atmosphere of simplicity and candor. There should be no straining after effect, no appeal that does not spring directly from the heart. The child should be expressing his or her inward self—not acting, in the adult sense of the word. For this reason the characters which children represent should be those of a common and deep humanity. It would be ideal if children could always act characters of their own years, whose feelings they could at once appreciate. But since this is not always possible the other folk who figure so largely in children's plays—quaint fairies, peasants, trolls, woodcutters, and the like—should have that artlessness that is akin to the artlessness of childhood.

Suppose the play is chosen, and the director ready to rehearse it. Gather the children together and set

the dates for the rehearsals, so that there can be no mistake, no excuses about attending. Find out the afternoons or early evenings that are nearest to suiting everybody. No hard and fast rule for the number of rehearsals required can be given here. Twenty rehearsals should suffice for a somewhat long and complex play, with a month to six weeks to rehearse it in. Ten rehearsals, undertaken in three weeks to a month, should suffice for a one-act play; but, of course, all depends on the mental equipment of the players. Too long a time in play preparation "stales" the players. They lose their interest. For little children rehearsing should not occupy more than two weeks, and the play should be very short. Length of rehearsal hours differs according to the ages of the players. For those in the grammar grades an hour and a half at a time should be the most. If attention seems to flag, and the children are tired, it will often be advisable to shorten the time. For little children half-hour rehearsals are sufficient. And for children from eight to eleven years old an hour's rehearsal is sufficient.

The final or dress rehearsal will always be longer than any of the others, and in setting a date for it, extra time must be allowed, particularly in the case of a long play. Three rehearsals a week make a wholesome average. But the director must judge about this, using tact and common sense in all things, and avoiding strain to the players.

As has been suggested, if the children have never acted before, begin with a simple play, preferably in

one act. And whether children have ever acted before or not, the method of producing the play is exactly the same; for, like everything else in the world, play-producing for children has a right way and a wrong way, a way that leads nowhere and a way that makes for genuine accomplishment.

There are two ways of selecting the cast. First, competitive choice; second, having the cast chosen by the director. In competitive choice, a selection from the play is read by all the children in rotation. The one that puts the most fervor or imagination into the reading of the lines is, by general vote, selected for the leading part. Then the one to fill the next part is chosen. The most important parts are filled first; then the less important. It is made clear to the players that merit decides the choice. If two casts are trained, the players who have the most important parts in the first cast are given the least important parts in the second cast. This serves two purposes. It gives all the players a chance, and prepares for any emergency that may arise. If one player is ill on the eve of performance, another can take his place. Moreover, it develops discipline. If a player knows that slackness or inattention on his part will result in another player's having it, he sets himself more ardently to the task in hand. If the children are undisciplined, have it understood that two absences from rehearsal without sufficient excuse will debar them from the part originally assigned.

When the cast is chosen by the director let the

children understand from the first that they are to abide by that choice. If the director apportions the parts according to remedial reasons, see that the sluggishly inclined children have brisk parts, that the shy child has something appealing to say and do, that the bumptious, forward child plays a character who is controlled and quiet. Unless there is some exceedingly good reason for it, do not deviate when once the parts have been assigned. If some of the children are to be put in charge of the properties, scenery, or lighting, select children on whom you can depend, discuss and apportion their duties at this first meeting. If properties must be made, all the children in the cast must agree to help. It will be well to set a date when they will meet and make them.

As soon as all the parts are assigned, have the children read the play aloud in rotation, each child reading when the character assigned to him begins to speak. This is the time when faults in pronunciation, in diction, in sing-songiness can be broken. Accustom them from the first to the right way of doing things. It is easier to be correct from the first than to hark back and undo what has already been done. If a child reads a line incorrectly more than once it is apt to become a habit. If the children make the character they are interpreting speak in a peculiar way, ask them why they do it. Get at their reasons. Show them logically why another way might be better, or why their way is good. Discuss the play and its characters as they go. A good deal has been said nowadays about letting children

interpret their own ideas of a character. This is an excellent thing, stimulating alike the player and director. But it can be carried too far. A child may often interpret a character wrongly. We do not expect a child to interpret music entirely as to his own ideas, pedaling when he pleases, playing pianissimo or forte, as the spirit moves him. All character interpretation should be subject to the molding influence of class discussion and the analysis of the play. For, after the play has been read once around by the cast it is time for one of the most important parts of play-producing to begin: namely, play analysis. This means a full discussion of all the points of the play, an example of which is given in the next chapter.

Discussion, analysis, and play-reading will probably occupy the first two rehearsals of a one-act play; but at the close of the first rehearsal have the players understand that at the third rehearsal they are to be letter-perfect in their lines, *and that no actual acting will occur until this has been accomplished*. Thus any child who lags in fulfilling this duty is made to realize that he or she is holding back all the rest, and the general eagerness to "begin to act the story" will wing their memories as nothing else can.

The third rehearsal is a *line rehearsal*. That is, a rehearsal for lines only. Have them go through the play from memory twice, prompting only when absolutely necessary. The first time they may go slowly, so as to correct mistakes, and the second time briskly, as if the actual performance were going on. Correct

here, suggest there. Have them from the first take up their cues with the utmost celerity. If all is not as it should be, never make a child nervous by nagging. Tell him that his interpretation will do for the present, and then work with him a little after the others have gone. Or have him come early at the following rehearsal. Encouragement and praise will do wonders for a backward, nervous child. The director should recognize effort and the will to do, no matter how cloaked or hidden by inability or mistakes. At the end of this third rehearsal take up a little of the actual acting, so that the children will not think you are too long in getting to the "fun" of the play.

Rough out the whole play at the next rehearsal, so that the players will have an idea of what it is going to be. Have the players move quickly and quietly through their exits and entrances, and know their positions on the stage. Begin to work with properties from the first, so that the players will become accustomed to them. If a basket of fruit or a fairy wand is to be used, have them on hand. It does not matter if the basket of fruit is a grape basket filled with rubber balls, and the wand a blackboard pointer or cane. The easy use of them is the thing to be gained. Do not be discouraged if this rehearsal does not come up to your expectations. Remember that it is only in the rough.

At the next rehearsal begin to mold the performance. See that the right points are emphasized. Repeat scenes till they have the finish which they ought to have. *Be sure that your rehearsals are taking place in*

*a room of the right size; that is, a size as nearly like the stage where the play will actually be performed as possible.* Too cramped a room will make all the motions of the children cramped, and to rehearse in too large a room when the stage is to be smaller will confuse them dreadfully. If you *must* rehearse in a room that is either too large or too small, try to have one early rehearsal on the stage where the play will finally be given, and let the children make allowances for space in their later work. This is one of the most trying things that directors have to deal with. Always rehearse on the stage that will be used on the final day, if possible.

At the fifth or sixth rehearsal, if you are training two casts, one cast can watch another cast at work. Do not permit whispering or sotto voce remarks while rehearsals are going on by those who are not rehearsing. Sound and movement are distressing to those who are trying to do their best. This is another rule that should be understood from the first.

If the play happens to have a large number of supernumeraries (players whose presence is necessary to the play, but who have few or no lines) have a rehearsal for them alone. Don't let them stand idly on your stage, staring blankly at the audience. If they are fairies, see that they form exquisite fairy-like groups. If they are to form a still background, see that they are well posed and natural. Give them comfortable positions that they can hold easily. If they are to form an animated background, give them plenty of stage busi-



ness, i.e., silent action or pantomime. Let them suggest as much of the stage business as possible. Suppose it is a market scene. Have them buying and selling. Have the driving of hard bargains going on in the background, while the main characters talk in the foreground. But if something unusually exciting is occurring to the main characters, then have all the buyers and sellers crowding up on tiptoe with curiosity, with gaping "What is this?" or with head-wagging of "I told you this might be expected!" In other words, have your play instinct with vitality. *Have it like life.* If you find the supernumeraries do not do good pantomime work, put lines into their mouths. Have them rehearse with these lines spoken aloud at first, and later spoken silently, only the lips moving. This method will be found very useful. It helps many children to keep from appearing wooden. It also gives them a feeling that their part is worth while. The good work of the principal players is often rendered less effective by the lifeless quality of the supernumeraries. Make the supernumeraries feel that they are needed and they will respond. They are the accompaniment of the theme carried by the principals, and as necessary to the play as bass notes to a piece of music. Their action is necessary to the completeness of the play. And it is perhaps at this juncture that the amateur director should be warned of the pitfalls of dragging action. Just because some of the action of the supernumeraries happens to be amusing or picturesque, don't give too much of it. Then it drags. Make it swift, clear,

and pictorial. Do not let it encroach on the work of the main players. Do not over-emphasize it. If there is a humorous bit of by-play, do not repeat it. The second time it will fall flat.

Put the supernumeraries and principals through a rehearsal after you have rehearsed the supernumeraries alone, and note the difference. Never have the supernumeraries come to a rehearsal where they are not needed. Get on without them unless their presence is absolutely necessary: for many children find it discouraging to come when they have nothing to do.

Have a rehearsal for scene-setting and lighting, if your scene-setter and property man are chosen from the children themselves. Of course this scene-setting and lighting may not involve more than seeing that a drapery of curtains is right, and that chairs and tables can be put in their proper places without too much noise and confusion. If there is a good deal of furniture to be moved, assign certain pieces of it to certain young scene-shifters, and this will lessen any confusion. See if they cannot make as few motions as possible in coming and going and placing the various things that are needed. Have the head scene-shifter keep a list of what is needed, and have a duplicate yourself. Use this same idea with the properties. If lighting involves seeing that a red bulb is turned on for a hearth-light effect, or simply the closing of shutters to darken the assembly-room, see that it is done promptly. Make someone responsible for it.

By the eighth rehearsal have the players go through

the play entirely on their own responsibility with the director sitting in front as audience, quietly jotting down with pencil and paper any mistakes which need to be rectified. Do not interrupt the play with objections. Let it go straight ahead. Prompt the players when necessary. When the rehearsal is over, praise the good points; deal lightly with its faults, unless they are glaring ones. Suggest a few things that need remedying. Also, while the rehearsal is in progress, see if the tempo drags. Are the cues taken up too slowly? This is one of the greatest faults of amateur productions. If the cues *are* taken up too slowly, time your play while the players are acting it. Suppose it takes thirty-eight minutes when it should take thirty. To pull up the tempo, make them race through it at breakneck speed for a single time, not acting, just saying the lines, and getting through with it in twenty-six or twenty-seven minutes. This will often prove of first aid to injured tempo.

By your tenth or dress rehearsal of a one-act play, everything should be in readiness. Set the hour of rehearsal half an hour earlier than the time when you really expect to begin. Getting into costumes and the general flurry and excitement always cause delay. The dress rehearsal should, if possible, take place two days before the performance, so as to leave a margin for rest, or final touches. Criticise sharply at this performance all that needs criticising.

Now comes performance. If the director is to have a large or critical audience, and is nervous over the

final result, do not let the players know it. Encourage them. Praise them. Stimulate them to do their best, and then let the curtain rise. Never sit out in the audience. Always be behind the scenes, ready for an emergency. Play a part yourself, if necessary. See that absolute quiet is maintained behind the scenes, and that the prompter is ready, prompt-book in hand. Warn your players that if their lines raise laughter or applause, they are to wait until the laughter or applause has subsided, and then continue as if nothing had happened.

All this is for the one-act play. If the children are taking part in a three- or four-act play, first analyze the whole play, so they can have an idea of it in its entirety, its story, and its meaning. Then go back. Read the first act in rotation, learn its lines, and begin a roughed-in rehearsal. By the time the rehearsal of the first act is being roughed in, begin work on the second act, reading, learning its lines, and roughing it in, as has been the case with the first act. When it is learned, lessen the rehearsals of the first act, and put in more time on the second act. As soon as your second act is being roughed out, swoop to your third act, and rehearse that twice as hard as you do your second act. A rough first act and an uneven second act are not as bad as a ragged, half-worked last act. It is better to begin less well and go up than to begin finely and come down. Put especial stress on the climax of your play. This must come out clearly, whatever else happens. But the whole thing should run as smoothly

as possible. Catch the rhythm of it, if you can, though a feeling for rhythm in a play only comes with practice in producing. Be especially careful of the tempo of your last act. See that the play is not "spotty," good and then less good throughout.

For an outdoor play have the children rehearse indoors first. Select your play site carefully. If possible, have it so that the sun does not shine directly in the faces of the players. After you have had two or three indoor rehearsals, take your play into the open. See that the voices carry clearly, and that the pantomime is effective. Step off to where the last row of the audience is to sit, and judge this for yourself. Remember that outdoor work can be broader than indoor work. As much detail is not necessary for it.

Remember that when you are producing a children's play you are setting a standard. Whether that standard is bad or good will rest far more with you, the director, than the child-players whom you guide and control.

### SCHOOLROOM PRODUCTIONS

A word should be said here about schoolroom productions, where scenery or even curtains cannot usually be had, and where the money for properties and costumes is usually nil. A play-production in a school auditorium is one thing; but all schools do not have auditoriums and a schoolroom production calls for great ingenuity if it is to carry with an atmosphere of reality or fantasy. It need hardly be said that for the

production of children's plays as wide a use as possible should be made of the school auditorium. If the school is in the country or suburbs, it is often possible to give a play out of doors. *But what of the city or small town school, with no chance of either auditorium or outdoor production?* The best thing that can be done in this case is to utilize the material at hand in the most imaginative manner possible. Use the space in front of the desks for an indoor play or a play that does not require much action. For a play that must have space, in which there is action that must have free play, *why not utilize the whole schoolroom?*

A whole schoolroom as a stage was used in one of the public schools of New York City in a very wonderful way. The children, with the help of their teacher, had constructed a simple play from Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, the story having been read aloud in the schoolroom before actual dramatization began. The scenes of the play were laid partly indoors and partly out of doors. The indoor scenes were acted in the space in front of the desks, which became a room, with the teacher's desk and chair as part of its furniture, *while the garden was represented by the desk space and the desks, the garden being the aisles between the desks!* And how was the feeling of the garden given? For weeks beforehand the boys and girls had been making tissue-paper flowers. They were fastened to stems and branches and lay on the desks in front of the players. As soon as the characters in the play stepped from the house into the gar-

den, the players at the desks slowly raised and waved the flowers that lay in front of them. They were mostly pink and white blossoms, with here and there a touch of blue and pale gold—for the children had been reading what flowers would be likely to grow in an English garden.

And suddenly the everyday schoolroom was transformed, flooded with color and blossom. But more than this. The boys had been practicing bird calls! The moment the flowers were raised and the garden bloomed, there came a shrill, sweet chorus of black-bird whistles, robin notes, a lilt from the thrush, and a dozen other twitterings that the boys had learned from someone who visited a settlement in their neighborhood. The schoolroom *was* a garden for the time being! And the children whose only playground was the city streets were transported to "England in the springtime," where hawthorn bloomed and robins sang! And there was utility as well as ideality, for later on the same flowers were used for a spring festival. The whole production of the play was a triumph of mind over matter. It represented a miracle that could be worked by any other teacher who uses her imagination, and induces her pupils to cultivate theirs. They had learned about English gardens, about flowers, and about birds. Somehow, as one thinks of it, is there not at once something valiant and pathetic in the thought of city sparrows, many of whom had never seen a garden, joyously imitating blither songbirds whose days are spent in free, sweet meadows, under blossoming boughs!

## THE MAKING OF PROGRAMMES

The making of programmes requires care. Repeating an effect or an idea should be avoided. If three plays of the same period are used they should show varying aspects of that period. All things considered, in dealing with historical plays, it is wiser to put them chronologically.

Usually it is safest to put your shortest play first, and your longest play last. Try to place your most finished bit of work at the end, where it will be twice as telling as at the beginning.

If you are producing two fairy plays, have them on different themes. If you are producing two plays at Christmas, have one modern and the other a costume play. There is a lift to costume plays for amateurs that modern plays do not have. A programme of one-act plays might consist of one folk play and one history play; or a modern play and a fairy play. A humorous play should come first and an idyllic play last in a programme where both are combined. If you are giving a curtain-raiser to a little two- or three-act fairy play have something modern or a nature play for your shorter piece.

It is a good idea for groups of settlements, or for different grades in a public school to study a one-act play or episode. If there are ten or twelve of such episodes a pageant can be formed at the end of the year. Have your play appropriate to its season. Do not have a play from which your audience can gain no



pleasure. Do not expect them to like the classical at first sight. You will probably have to begin with something light or amusing.

#### WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF THE CHILDREN'S PLAY MOVEMENT

A higher and more imaginative standard in plays throughout the country.

Greater care and knowledge used in play-production as regards simple scenery, costumes, and properties.

A wider use of the school auditorium as a benefit to the community.

The use of plays in country schools as related not only to the school, but to the life of the community.

The utilization of material at hand, such as open-air plays on the common or village green instead of in a stuffy schoolroom. The use of unoccupied barns for children's community theaters in summer; of the town hall for the same purpose in winter.

A greater interchange between public school, social settlement, church guild, and social center. In the children's play movement there is already discernible a certain waste of effort and of art. A children's play is made to serve one purpose when it ought to serve ten. Usually a play is given once or twice in a settlement or school, and there is an end of it. What could be done is this: the play might be given in the school before an audience of children, then before an audience of fathers and mothers. Then it might be taken to the

nearest settlement and repeated there, to the nearest church guild and repeated there. What about other places to which it might be giving joy? What about homes for the aged? What about orphan asylums? Children's wards in hospitals? What about utilizing a hall in or near a factory? The play movement is doing a great deal, but not half what it might. The children in district X go to the settlement in district X, and to the school in district X. Why not interchange with their plays?

The social settlements of Boston interchange plays and players with splendid results. All the thought and effort that go to the directing of a play might be made to serve a number of communities instead of one, and much social waste could be avoided. Interchange in the large cities would do a great deal toward drawing the vast conglomerate mass together.

It is a pity that a simple outdoor stage, such as is used in Palermo and other Italian cities, could not be utilized in tenement districts. It somewhat resembles the floats that were used in medieval miracle plays and pageants, only it is smaller, and has two screens for wings. This stage could be set up in a city street and plays could thus be acted out of doors.

All schools, settlements, and guilds should own their own stage equipment. The children should be taught to take delight in adding to the collection of scenery, properties, and costumes. The boys who take manual training can make the furniture. The girls can learn to make simple costumes, and to dye them.

## IV

### PLAY ANALYSIS FOR CHILDREN

Two short plays and suggestions for their analysis are given in this chapter, so that teachers and amateur directors may use them as a basis for analyzing other plays for children. The first is a very simple dramatization of Browning's *Pied Piper* for the lower grades and younger children, and the second, for the grammar grades and older children, is Christina Rossetti's *Pageant of Months*. There are several reasons for this choice. One of them is that the *Pied Piper* and the *Pageant of Months* can be found in any public library, and so are easily available for teachers and students. Another reason is that in learning their lines the children will be absorbing the best literature. In the little dramatization of Browning's poem only two of the lines are not his. All the rest have been taken directly from the poem. Moreover, these two selections represent two types of drama: the first is full of action and has a definite plot and climax, while the second is static and appeals through the beauty of its unusualness and the charm of its lines. It should be kept in mind that beauty is not always requisite for a play; but it is requisite for a pageant. Also the *Pied Piper* uses a

great many characters, and has what might in a small way be termed "mass effect," while the *Pageant of Months* depends on individual acting. In the *Pied Piper* the supernumeraries and what they do are as important to the action of the play as was the chorus to the old Greek drama. In the *Pageant of Months* there are no supernumeraries.

## THE PIED PIPER

(A Play in One Act from Browning's Poem)

## CHARACTERS

THE PIED PIPER.

THE MAYOR.

FIRST MEMBER OF THE CORPORATION.

SECOND MEMBER OF THE CORPORATION.

JUSTINA, a young girl.

ABRAHAM, an old man.

RUDOLF, a stranger.

BERTHA, his wife.

GRETCHEN, daughter of the Mayor.

HANS, a boy.

ELSE

AGATHE

ERNESTINE

WILHELMINA

} Market Women.

PLODDER	}	Rats.
FRISKER		
GREYCHIN		
PRICKWHISKER		
BROWN-EAR		
GREY-EAR		
BLACK-EAR	}	

Townpeople of Hamlin. Other Market Women.  
 Members of the Corporation. Children, Boys  
 and Girls. Rats.

PLACE: *Hamlin in Brunswick, 1376.*

SCENE: *A Market Place. There are trees in background, and at back and sides. Those at left are very thick, as are those at background. ELSE, WILHELMINA, AGATHE, and ERNESTINE enter. They are accompanied by JUSTINA and her grandmother, as well as by children, who help them set up their stalls and merchandise. Old ABRAHAM enters, leaning on his cane. The stalls are set up at right and left. There are none in background.*

*While they are being set up the rats GREYCHIN, FRISKER, and PRICKWHISKER peep out from right. They are joined by other rats, and as soon as the stalls are all set up they rush out. They upset the stalls, overturn the cradle, and carry off a cheese in their flight. The women run and scream and there is general confusion. All the stalls are righted again, and the children go toward background and disappear. Then down from background come RUDOLF and*

BERTHA, *and several customers who begin to buy at the stalls.*

RUDOLF

What place is this?

ABRAHAM

'Tis Hameline Town in Brunswick,  
By famous Hanover City.  
The river Weser, deep and wide,  
Washes its walls on the southern side; [*Points.*  
A pleasanter spot you've never spied  
I'll warrant, as through the land you go;  
But to see our townsfolk suffer so  
From vermin is a pity.  
*[Man and his wife look curious.*

*Rats!*

They fight the dogs and kill the cats.

AGATHE

And bite the babies in their cradles.

ELSE

And eat the cheeses out of the vats!

ERNESTINE

And lick the soup from the cooks' own ladles!

WILHELMINA

Split open the kegs of the salted sprats.

ABRAHAM

Make nests inside men's Sunday hats!

ELSE

And even spoil the women's chats

By drowning their speaking

With shrieking and squeaking

In fifty different sharps and flats!

JUSTINA

*(Looking off in background)*

Here come the people in a body

From the town hall flocking.

ELSE

*(To the Travelers)*

Oh, it's clear our Mayor's a noddy!

And the corporation—*shocking!*

*[MAYOR and Corporation come down from background, with townspeople following and muttering amongst themselves.]*

AGATHE

To think we buy gowns lined with ermine

For dolts that can't or won't determine

What's best to rid us of our vermin!

*[Women nod to confirm her shrill remark. There is a muttered "Ah-a-a! Ah-a-a!" in rising cadence from the townsfolk.]*

## CHILDREN'S PLAYS

ERNESTINE

*(To Mayor)*

You hope, because you're old and obese,  
To find in the furry civic robe, ease.

WILHELMINA

*(To Mayor and Corporation)*

Rouse up, sirs, give your brains a racking  
To find the remedy we're lacking!  
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!  
Let the Mayor break silence!

MAYOR

For a guilder my ermine gown I'd sell;  
I wish I were a mile hence!  
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—  
I'm sure my poor head aches again,  
I've scratched it so and all in vain.  
Oh, for a trap! a trap! a trap!

[THE PIED PIPER *enters unperceived from background. He plays two short squeaks on his pipe.*

ELSE

Oh, did you hear a gentle tap?

MAYOR

Bless us! What's that?  
Anything like the sound of a rat



Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!

*[All turn and perceive the PIPER, a slender figure with light loose hair and swarthy skin. He wears a cloak that is half red, half yellow. All look at him with the greatest possible interest.]*

ABRAHAM

It is as if my great grandsire  
Starting up at the trump of Doom's tone  
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!

JUSTINA

*(To a marketer)*

Faith, he's like a prince, though he wears no sable!

TOWNSFOLK

Look! Look!

THE PIED PIPER

Please your honors, I'm able  
By means of a secret charm to draw  
All living creatures beneath the sun  
That creep or swim or fly or run  
After me as you never saw!  
And chiefly I use my charm  
On creatures that do people harm,  
The mole, the toad, the newt, the viper,  
And people call me the Pied Piper.

Yet, poor Piper that I am,  
In Tartary I freed the Cham  
Last June from his huge swarm of gnats;  
I eased in Asia the Myzam  
Of a monstrous brood of vampire bats;  
And as for what your brain bewilders  
If I can rid your town of rats  
Will you give me a thousand guilders?

MAYOR

One? Fifty thousand guilders there'll be!

THE PIED PIPER

Come with me and you shall see!

*[They troop out background, the MAYOR and PIPER leading. JUSTINA lingers to help her old grandmother, who must go slowly. While the grandmother is picking up her things JUSTINA has run to look at what was passing, and reports as she helps her grandmother toward background.]*

JUSTINA

Into the street the Piper stept  
Smiling at first a little smile  
As if he knew what magic slept  
In his quiet pipe the while.

*[From the distance, growing fainter, comes the sound of a pipe magically blown.]*

Then, like a musical adept,  
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled  
And blue and green his sharp eyes twinkled,  
Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled!

[JUSTINA and her grandmother exeunt,  
background. Just as they go FRISKER  
appears at left, down stage, and peers  
out between the stalls. Again the pipe is  
heard, this time far, but very gradually  
coming nearer.

FRISKER

Leave your cheeses and pickletubs hollow!  
Hark where the pipe plays "Follow! Follow!"

PLODDER

*(Joining Frisker)*

At the first shrill notes of the pipe  
I hear a sound as of scraping tripe!

*[He rushes away, background.]*

FRISKER

*(Dancing)*

And putting apples wondrous ripe  
Into a cider press's gripe!

*[He dances away, background.]*

GREYCHIN

*(Appearing and smacking his lips)*

And moving away of pickletub boards,

And a leaving ajar of conserve cupboards,  
And a dragging the corks of train oil flasks . . .

*[He rushes out, background.]*

PRICKWHISKER

And a breaking the hoops of butter casks!

BROWN-EAR

And it sounds as if a voice  
Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery  
Breathes and calls out: "Oh, rats, rejoice!  
The world is grown to a great drysaltery!"

*[BROWN-EAR followed by two other rats  
dashes out, background.]*

GREY-EAR

*(Ecstatic)*

So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,  
Breakfast, dinner, supper, luncheon!

*[He goes out, background.]*

BLACK-EAR

Leave your cellars and pickletubs hollow!  
Hark where the pipe cries "Follow! Follow!"

*[BLACK-EAR followed by a dozen other rats  
dashes out, background. Just as they  
disappear, left background, from right  
background walks the PIED PIPER, and*

*after him a troop of rats. He leads them round and round the stage, more and more rats joining him. Then suddenly he comes straight down the stage, wheels at the front and goes straight for background, the rats following. At left the townspeople begin to appear.*

## FIRST MEMBER OF CORPORATION

The Piper has turned along the street  
To where the Weser rolls its waters,  
And has drowned the rats and their sons and daughters!  
*[He embraces the man nearest him in his joy.*

## MAYOR

*(To Boy)*

Go and tell the Hamline people  
To ring the bells till they rock the steeple!

## FIRST MEMBER OF CORPORATION

Aye, be swift and get long poles,  
Poke out the nests and block up the holes.

## MAYOR

Consult with carpenters and builders  
And in the town leave never a trace  
Of the Rats.

## CHILDREN'S PLAYS

## THE PIED PIPER

*(Quietly appearing in their midst)*

First, please, my thousand guilders.

*[Dead silence.]*

## THE TOWNSFOLK

*(Whispering together)*

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looks blue!  
So does the Corporation, too.

## FIRST MEMBER OF CORPORATION

*(Aside to the Mayor)*

Our council dinners make rare havoc  
With Claret, Moselle, Ver de Grave, Hock.

## SECOND MEMBER OF CORPORATION

*(Aside to the Mayor)*

And how this money would replenish  
Our cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish!

## MAYOR

*(To the Pied Piper)*

Our business was done at the river's brink:  
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,  
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.  
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink  
From the duty of giving you something to drink,  
And a matter of money to put in your poke.

But as for the guilders, what we spoke  
Of them, as you very well know, was a joke.  
Besides, our losses have made us thrifty.  
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty.

## THE PIED PIPER

No trifling. I can't wait. Besides  
I've promised to visit by dinner time  
Bagdad and accept the prime  
Of the head cook's pottage—all he's rich in,  
For having left in the Caliph's kitchen  
Of a nest of scorpions not one survivor.  
With him I proved no bargain driver.  
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver.  
And folks who put me in a passion  
Will find me pipe in another fashion.

## MAYOR

How, Piper! D'ye think I'll brook  
Being treated worse than a cook?  
Insulted by a lazy ribald  
With idle pipe and vesture pibald.  
Do you threaten us, fellow? Do your worst.  
Blow your pipe until you burst.

[*The MAYOR strides angrily away. PIPER  
blows a few notes on his pipe. Children  
come scampering out, right and left and  
from background, and stand enraptured.*

## THE PIED PIPER

Come away to a joyous land  
Joining the town, and just at hand.

*[Children laugh and clap their hands,  
crowding about him.]*

There are fruit trees, streams all silver blue:  
And flowers put forth a fairer hue  
And everything is strange and new,  
The sparrow there is the peacock's peer,  
The dog outruns your fallow deer,  
The honey-bees have lost their stings,  
And horses are born with eagles' wings!

*[Children cry out delightedly. Their  
mothers touch them on their shoulders.  
But the children do not heed. They  
have eyes for no one but the PIED  
PIPER. He rises, blows a few notes,  
then pauses.]*

You'll find it lying South by West,  
If to Koppelberg hill your steps are addressed.  
Come away.

*[The children start to follow. The Towns-  
folk cry out.]*

## TOWNSFOLK

Stay! Stay!

## THE PIED PIPER

*Our business was done at the river's brink.*



*What's gone can never come back, I think.*

*[To the Children.*

Come away!

TOWNSFOLK

Nay! Stay!

*[THE PIED PIPER plays and the Children  
follow him out background.*

MAYOR

We cannot follow where he has led.

Our feet are suddenly made of lead.

*[JUSTINA is near the trees in background.  
She speaks from there.*

JUSTINA

The Piper has turned to the High Street;

'Tis where the Weser rolls its waters

Right in the way of your sons and daughters!

TOWNSFOLK

Ah!

JUSTINA

Now he has turned from South to West

And to Koppelberg hill his steps are addressed.

MAYOR

He can never cross that mighty top!

ELSE

He'll be forced to let the piping drop!

WILHELMINA

And we shall see the children stop.

JUSTINA

No! No! They have reached the mountain's side.

A wondrous portal has opened wide!

As if a cavern were suddenly hollow—

The piper plays and the children follow.

They all are in, to the very last,

And the door in the mountain side shut fast!

*[At this last word the people regain their  
power of moving.]*

MAYOR

Send East, send West, send North, send South,

And offer the Piper by word of mouth

Wherever it is man's lot to find him

Silver and gold to his heart's content,

If he'll only return the way he went,

And bring the children behind him.

WILHELMINA

Alas! Alas! 'Tis a lost endeavor!

The Piper and children have gone forever!

*[As the people turn sadly and go away, old  
ABRAHAM stands for a moment like one  
speaking the Epilogue and says:]*

## ABRAHAM

So, Audience, let you and me be wipers  
Of scores out with all men—especially Pipers.

## END OF PLAY

Discuss the kind of person each character is, and his or her relation to the play, when necessary.

Evidently the play begins in a square, so we can give the play indoors in winter or outdoors in summer. In the summer have a place with grass and trees, or screens built of branches. In the winter, green hangings and pine trees. Or a city street. (See chapter on Scenery.) And then there would be market stalls. How could they be made? Just ordinary wooden boxes could be made to do, and on them put cheese and butter boxes. Then there would be apples, and some bright colored vegetables like carrots, and perhaps a small keg of herring. What other things would there be? Wouldn't covering a round wooden butter-box or even a small collar-box with orange-yellow tissue paper make it look like a huge cheese? And how would a cradle be made? (See Properties.) So much for the scene-setting. Now for the costumes?

What kind of clothes would they wear in the fourteenth century? Who can tell? What was the style of their dress? They wove and spun their own material, did they not? What would these materials be?

Didn't the children wear high-waisted little dresses, with straight skirts and white muslin caps or coifs? What did the Mayor wear? Read the text. Who gave him this ermine cloak? How shall we make it? (See chapter on Costuming.) The Piper's costume is described, his cloak was half red and half yellow. The other people must have worn clothes of a solid color or they wouldn't have been so surprised at his.

Now the Rats. What will they wear? Were they all in black? Read the text, and see what their names are. That will help you decide. Suppose they use muslin for their costumes, and have masks of the same color for their faces, and caps with ears. And whiskers, and tails.

Now the play has begun and the people have come in. How will Abraham walk? Why? What will Justina do when the rats run in and her old grandmother cannot get away? Won't she try and shield her grandmother, half bending over her? It would seem so. How will the travelers look? Will they have packs on their backs? How will they act when they hear about the rats? Won't they want to run away? Ah, but word has come that the Mayor is coming. The travelers will want to stay and see what the man who rules this rat-haunted town looks like.

And how does the Mayor act? What sort of a man is he? Read the text. He is a little sorry for himself, isn't he? The people are not glad to see him, evidently. How would he look as he came toward them? Wouldn't he be looking shiftily from right

to left? And when they menace him wouldn't he hold a cloak in front of his face? And what makes him lower it? The sound of a tap. Only it wasn't a tap. It was music. And now we behold the Pied Piper. What does Pied mean? Do the people feel that this man is strange? What does old Abraham say? Does the Piper's speech make him seem like one of themselves, or stranger still? How could he go to so many far-off countries in a short space of time? Do you think he flew on his magic cloak? Did you ever hear that red was the color for magicians to wear? It was the hue of magic. But the Piper's cloak is half red only. Ah, maybe that means he is half magic and half human. What sort of a man do you think he is? He tells about himself quite frankly, doesn't he? Where he has been, what he has done, and what he can do. He comes to the point at once. Would you say he was honest, and trustworthy?

What does the Mayor say?

And what does the Piper say to that? Oh, he will *show* them. He won't just talk about it. What sort of a man does that make him out to be? Now the people have all followed the Piper off the scene, except Justina and her grandmother. And Justina cannot help looking to see what is happening! And what does she see? It would seem that the Piper is stranger than ever! And what do we hear? The first notes of his piping.

Now Justina and her grandmother have gone, and what has happened? What the Piper said has come true!

The rats are coming out of their holes. What seems to be the chief characteristic of the rats from their conversation? They are gluttons. Isn't that why we despise them so?

Back comes the Piper. The rats have followed him away. And now the people gather excitedly to tell each other the news. Is their first thought to thank or to praise the Piper? Do they seem to be grateful? What do they say? And then the Piper comes back for his pay. And what does he say? He asks for his money. This is one of the really exciting moments in the play. Will the Mayor give it or won't he? Do you think the Piper doubts that he will get it? Honest people expect others to be like themselves, do they not? The Mayor takes counsel with his two followers from the Corporation. What sort of men are they? Read the text. You can judge them by what they say. What do the people do? Do they urge the Mayor to pay at once? Is the Piper angry? What does he say? Read the text.

What does the Mayor reply?

You will notice that now the Piper does what is characteristic of him. He does not talk. He acts. What does he do? Do you think that his telling the children a story makes him seem even more wonderful to them? Why?

What do the people do when they see the children following the Piper?

Does anyone think of calling the Piper back and offering him the money?

Why were the townsfolk unable to move their feet, do you think? What was it held them? Was it a spell? Why should it begin just as the children were leaving, and stop when the children entered the mountain, and the door was closed?

What did the Mayor do? What sort of a man does this make him out to be? Was he fit to be Mayor? Were any of the townspeople any fitter?

How do you suppose they knew that the children were gone forever? Did they feel it in their guilty hearts? What does the end of the play say about keeping promises? What else does the play teach? Doesn't it teach that if all the people of a town or a nation love gold too much that they may lose something better than gold? The children may now begin to learn the lines of the play by heart.

For an analysis of *The Pageant of Months* first read the Pageant aloud, and note that *The Pageant of Months* cannot rightly be termed a play. It has no climax or culminating point, and tells no definite story. It is rather a series of pictures and of moods. It does not hold one between fear and hope. It arouses only gentle expectation. It cannot be termed "dramatic" in the usual sense of the word. But it does interest us through its sheer beauty; and it gives us an enlivened sense of the change and color of the year. This is its central theme, or idea.

If *The Pageant of Months* is to be given by a cast of boys and girls, divide them into the groups indi-

cated in the Pageant. Since the months have no particular sex, changes can be made if the cast has more boys than girls, or vice versa.

Suppose the play has been read around by the class. What are you going to do for your scene-setting? What the scene-set really requires is a divided stage, with the wall of the cottage running down the center. One half of the stage will thus be the interior of the cottage, and one half will be the cottage's open grounds. This is impossible except for expensive stage equipment. Therefore, the scene must be one thing or the other. Which shall it be? A woodland outdoor scene, or an indoor scene? Which can be done best? Read the text. The Pageant begins with a suggestion of cold weather. This could not be suggested in a green garden or wood. Clearly the scene must be laid indoors. Let it be set in the large, "comfortable cottage" that the directions call for.

There would be an open hearth at one end and a handsomely made settle beside it, and a fur rug on the bare floor. Bare floors must be used because there is to be a dance at the end. The directions call for it.

"A table on which the breakfast things have been left standing," the directions say. But that means *January's* breakfast, not such a breakfast as mortals eat—coffee and eggs and bacon. January was an immortal and would, therefore, eat such things as immortals delight in. There would be a very white loaf, and perhaps some golden honey made by wild bees—such honey as you read of in Greek mythology. A bowl



of lump sugar that looks like frost-work. A tall silver tankard or pitcher filled with ambrosia. And fruit—What about golden apples of Hesperides? And then all the fairy tales and poetry books talk about “jeweled fruits.” Isn’t it possible that January could have some of those? And what would they be like? Apples that looked like huge rubies, and oranges of gold. But where shall such fruits be found? Have you never seen them growing? *Think*. Why, they grow on Christmas trees! And they are called Christmas decorations. Have two platters, or bowls, heaped high with them. And would the tablecloth be like other tablecloths? Perhaps it would be a strip of purple, edged with gold, or of scarlet, edged with silver. And what would the dishes be? Gold and silver also. (See chapter on Properties.)

What of the open fire? It is all right to have it at the first when January is there. But we cannot have it when July and August are there. What shall be done? When May enters, can she not put a green branch over it? And September, the month of passing leaves, can take it off again. Thus it will be a symbol. The poets of the Far East used to speak of “the fire of Spring,” and sometimes you find it alluded to in Bohemian legends. It will be a gay scarlet and yellow and orange tissue-paper fire, of course, with a touch of gray for ashes. The tree branch can be real, or be made by one of the players.

And since January’s house is not like other houses, there might be an alcove at the other end of the room

from the fire, with green hangings the color of forest trees. When these hangings are parted you can see that there are other green hangings in the alcove, and a pine tree or two standing against them. (You can manage without the pine trees, if you must.) It will seem as if January would step into the out-of-doors at a moment's notice, if he wanted to. If you cannot afford such a thing as a cottage set, then hang the whole scene with brown or green curtains, and pretend the rest. In this case you cannot have a hearth, but you can have a brazier. (See directions for making one under Properties.)

The Pageant calls for lambs. Of course you cannot have them. What should be done? Let us read the lines. February says "Oh, you, you little wonder, come, come in." One has no right to change the words of an author, but perhaps not even Christina Rossetti herself would object to having this word changed to "go." That would mean that the fold was just outside the door, and the lambs and sheep were going to it. The word "go" instead of "come" could be used through the rest of the lines. A little later the directions say that February retires into the background. That is where the curtained alcove comes in. February can go into that and disappear from view. Wherever the directions say that the characters go out or disappear from view, they can retire into this alcove. Thus the problem will be solved.

Now about the characters themselves. What sort of a person is January? Is he not dignified and

stately? And surely kind, for he stirs the fire, hoping that whoever is passing through the snow will have a light. And next to people his second thought is for animals. And what will January wear? Such robes as you see in Greek mythology, or in the pictures of symbolic characters that Dante Rossetti and his friend Burne-Jones loved to paint. Study these pictures. For color, his robe should be white. And is he old or young?

Now the robins come in. They are small, so children can play them. How will they be dressed? What will their actions be? Will they hop like robins and cock their heads on one side? Where will you find how to make their costumes? Look at the costumes in *The Bird Masque* by Percy MacKaye, and that will help you. The directions say that they pick up crumbs and sugar. Of course they can't stoop down to the floor. January must put the sugar on the edge of the table.

Now comes February. Since it may be impossible to have a glass on the window-sill, suppose you have a clear glass bowl on the table where the wondrous fruits are. Now the robins go into the alcove.

How will you make the twittering of birds for April? Aren't there toys that make sounds just like birds? Could not two or three play at once? There is no music for April's song. Could it not be recited to music? How would Mendelssohn's *Spring Song* do?

What talk of birds and flowers there is when May

arrives! May ought to be able to tell all about them. What do they look like, and where do they grow?

June can fall asleep on the settle, in front of the fire that is now covered with a bough. "Laburnam" and "the arbor" can be the curtained alcove. When December comes in he might shake off snow from his sleeves, like silver powder.

All the characters have now been discussed and costumed, we will suppose. The end of the Pageant is reached. November and December are on the scene. The fire is burning. December is "weaving a garland." How would it be to have it a Christmas wreath? Then it could be hung up, and as December was hanging it, the other characters could come in.

Now all join in a dance. "A stately measure," the directions say. What shall it be? How would Dvorak's *Humoresque* do?

If people in the audience like the Pageant very much—as no doubt they will if the parts are well done—the dance can be repeated. It can either be the same dance or a different one. And suppose there are one or two encores? Wouldn't it be pretty to have the little robins take the first with their brisk "hop, hop, hop," and then the Months the second?

## V

### COSTUMES: WHAT TO SELECT AND WHAT TO AVOID

CORRECT and artistic costuming for children's plays involves a knowledge of historical accuracy, color, and material.

Study the best costume books, and histories and fairy tales illustrated by well-known artists. *See if the author of the play has not given directions which you can follow.*

Historical accuracy is a rock on which many amateur directors come to grief: they are not sure of their centuries. Headgear and footwear are apt to be of one century and costumes of another.

Select your costumes with reference to your background, so there will be no color clash. Use scarlet and pink very sparingly. They put other colors out of countenance. Do not costume all your characters in bright shades. It makes the scene confusing to the eye. *And unless you are producing an operetta, do not costume your peasants all alike, and all in the same colors.* Take common sense as your guide. Do not put little peasant girls into red velvet skirts or woodcutters into satin jackets. Let them wear the plain, rough ma-

terials that they would naturally have. *Strive to have your costumes appropriate.* Twenty years ago fairies were dressed in short, stiff white skirts, and tight star-spangled bodices; but to-day we know that there is nothing stiff or starchy about a fairy. They are costumed in soft, clinging materials suggesting the twilight of deep woods, the glamour of mist and moonshine. Do not put weary travelers, explorers, or pioneers into spick-and-span raiment. Their garments should show the dust and soil of travel. See that the footgear of all the players in one scene belongs to the same period. See that your fairies and spirits wear sandals, not white, high-heeled slippers or high-heeled slippers of any color.

One well-known English pageant master posted this sign where it could be read by all groups of children taking part in the pageant: "*Keep up your stockings. Have your footgear all alike.*" This might also be posted by the director of children's plays!

Discuss the costumes with the child-players who are to wear them. It is perfectly possible for a costume to have historical value, to be in harmony with its background, and yet have emotional value as well. A sinister figure might be all in black, with touches of scarlet; innocence in white; while a pale, tender green, like the first touch of spring, would be for something meant to suggest youth and hope. Woodsy creatures would wear wood colors, and so forth. Fairies of the dawn would be in dawn color; twilight elves would be in gray, the color of the twilight. A morality play

recently produced by a cast of amateur players had a background of deep cream color: the play was laid in the latter half of the seventeenth century. The century in which the play was laid naturally decided the lines of the costumes; but to the youthful players themselves were left the deciding of the color scheme, aided always by suggestions from the director. "Love," said one child, "should wear white, because the thoughts of Love are always pure and fair." This decided that all the colors must be symbolical. Wisdom, by common consent, was attired in deep purple, a royal color; while another character, Grumble, must be all in black, since grumbling suggested darkness. "And Envy should wear green," cried another, "because people are said to be green with envy." What color should Vanity wear? This was a difficult question to decide. Pink, blue, and yellow were all discarded. "I think," said one dark-eyed girl, "that Vanity should wear a little of every color." Thus an imitation brocade was decided on for Vanity. This shows how symbolic costumes can be designed.

See that the players wear their hair in a mode that corresponds to their costumes. Do not put modern head-dressing and ancient costumes together. Study authentic pictures. The Greek women or girls wore their hair bound in a chaplet. In Saxon times they wore it in two long heavy braids. In the Middle Ages girls and women wore their hair tucked beneath a cap or coif. In the eighteenth century it was pompadoured and powdered. Peasants and Indian maidens

would naturally wear their hair in two braids. Woodland spirits and little dryads would naturally wear their hair flying. Unless the play is laid in the present time, or in the days of the Civil War, never put hair ribbons on the children. Above all, never, *never* put them on spirits, fairies, court ladies, Greek maidens, Puritans, Indians, or Colonials.

Do not mix the costumes of two centuries. Unless otherwise indicated keep the lines of the costumes soft and flowing. Do not bunch the costumes of fairies and spirits with too many petticoats.

Make the simple costumes yourself. They will have better material, lines, and color than those obtainable from costumers. If you wish to, dye them the desired shades, although the color range of what you can buy is now much larger than formerly.

For materials, the simplest weaves will do as well as the most ornate. Use cheesecloth for thin material, such as fairy dresses and Greek robes. Use cambric and silesia to simulate satin, cotton crepon or silk crepon, where a softer and heavier material than cheesecloth is needed. Use silkoline for flowered silk. Use burlap for rough peasant suits or tunics; hop-sacking for others. White cotton-batting with black tails basted on it makes ermine. For medieval costumes the pictures in illustrated editions of Guizot's *Histories of France and England* will be found invaluable. Also Boutet de Monvel's *Jeanne D'Arc*, and good illustrated editions of *Pilgrim's Progress* contain pictures of costumes that can be easily copied. For



Grecian, mythological, and neo-Grecian costumes *The Wonder Book* by Hawthorne, with illustrations by Walter Crane, has some very charming examples. For different periods of American costume try *Eggleson's Illustrated History of the United States*, and *Costume in America* by Elizabeth McClelland. All the books of fairy tales edited by Andrew Lang have delightful fairy costumes in them. For costumes of the Holy Land see *The Castle of Zion* by George Hodges, with illustrations. The Copley Prints of *The Holy Grail*, by Abbey, will suggest costumes for the court of Arthur and his Knights. *The Arabian Nights*, illustrated by Maxfield Parrish, has imaginative ideas for Arabian costumes.

## VI

### SCENERY AND HOW TO MAKE IT

NEXT in importance to selecting the cast of a children's play is the selecting of its scenery. The day of ornate, cluttered scenery has gone by, both for the adult and the children's theater. Hangings are now used where wood sets and papier-maché effects once held sway. Line and color and light are now used to convey effect. The audience is credited with a little imagination. Suggestion is used instead of actuality.

Adequate plays for children usually contain ample directions for costume setting, and the wise director will follow them. The atmosphere of a play is at least half created by its scene-setting. Avoid the tawdry and meaningless as you would a pestilence.

*Strive for simplicity of effect.* Dark-green hangings with a brown floor-cloth, and some make-believe tree-trunks, suggest a wood. One needs no more scenery than that to convey the heart of a forest. See to it that when the curtains part at the entrance of a character that there are other green curtains behind them, so as to keep the deep forest effect. Another way of suggesting a wood is to fasten dozens of real tree branches to green or brown curtains. Or at the Christmas season, pine trees may suggest the forest

primeval. The Educational Dramatic League (New York) has instituted high screens draped with whatever colors are needed. The framework of the screens is not unlike the wooden "clothes-horses" used for drying clothes, only they are made of iron and stand more securely. For draping such screens, whether the woodwork is iron or wood, use felt, canton flannel, crepon, or paper muslin, according to the scene you wish to convey. Crape paper may also be used, but it is rather perishable.

Dark forest-green hangings are absolutely invaluable. If only one set of hangings can be afforded, have them of this color. And denim is a good serviceable material. They can be a wood in one scene, and with a flat brown border basted to the other side they can suggest a Puritan interior. With a rose-flower cretonne border basted to them they can become a Colonial room. With a pale-blue border, they are a palace. With a white Grecian border, they represent a room in a Grecian home. To have them suggest the interior of a peasant home is, naturally, the most difficult of all, because the scene of a rude interior with a hearth is usually meant to be conveyed. For this sort of a scene have the furniture low, a low bench or two, and a somewhat squat table. Have as little furniture as possible. You wish merely to suggest the scene. Have a tallow dip for a light, and for a hearth—not a hearth at all! Have a brazier with charcoal burning, as is often customary in some of the European peasant homes. This can be made by painting a tripod wash-

stand black, and setting a candle deep in it, or burning a little red powder to give a glow. One has always to be careful of fire; but to burn a candle or powder in a bowl is generally safe. Stand the tripod where it is least likely to be upset. The characters who enter can warm their hands at it as at a hearth. Of course, if it can be had, a red electric bulb set in the bowl, or a red spot-light turned on it is the best of all.

*Never mix painted and curtain scenery. This is never done by the artists of the stage.* Take the Winthrop Ames production of *Snow White* for a model. There, scenes with their background of curtains alternated with painted scenes. The two were never used together. Rhinehardt, a man who has made the Gordon Craig ideas the basis of his stage art, procures wonderful effects by the use of draped interiors. He never mixes painted and draped scenery. These men are, of course, artists of the adult stage; but what they do can be followed in a small way for the children's stage. Some suggestions follow. They are designs which can be followed at the least possible expense.

FOR A PALACE.—Hangings of pale blue, or deep vivid blue. A throne chair of white and gold, set on a raised dais, covered with blue. But suppose a throne chair cannot be had? Then a box dais, and on it set firmly an armchair. Drape or cover this with pale-blue cambric, glazed side outward, to represent satin. Place over the back of it cloth of gold that is made by gilding burlap with radiator bronze; or a spangled

scarf placed straight across the back will make a fine glitter.

A GARDEN.—The same method of arrangement as for a wood or forest, with vines of paper flowers that can be bought very cheaply by the yard from the Dennison Tissue Paper Co. These vines are fastened to the curtains as if on a trellis. A little confetti laid beneath them gives the effect of fallen blossoms.

A DUNGEON.—Black hangings, and black or pine furniture. A black or gray floor-cloth.

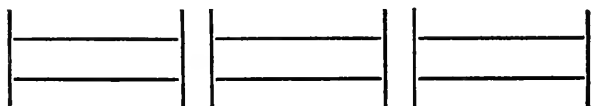
A STREET SCENE.—This is the most difficult to convey by means of curtains, but it can be done. Remember that you are to suggest a street scene only. Have gray unglazed cambric hangings, with the outlines of doors and quaintly shaped windows put on life-size by stitching outlines of black cambric to the gray curtains. It is better to stitch them than to paint them, for cloth that shows up paint is really rather expensive. The effect is to suggest a street, and as this kind of scenery belongs to no particular period it can be used from the tenth to the seventeenth century. It can also be used to suggest modern scenes in quaint European villages such as little out-of-the-way French, German, Scandinavian, or Russian towns. For a modern street scene it is, of course, quite inappropriate.

A PEASANT'S HOME.—As has been suggested, a brazier, benches, and a table. Brown hangings, and a brown floor-cloth if possible. If not, green will do.

AN EASTERN PALACE.—Yellow curtains, with a throne covered in either scarlet or orange.

THE DROP-CURTAIN.—For a drop-curtain, dark green is to be preferred above all other colors. Next to this dark brown. It must be of thick material, denim or felt. Take dark blue or dark red if you cannot get green or brown. Green is best because it can be used to advantage in forest scenes after it is worn out as a curtain. Or brown curtains can be used when half worn out for a floor-cloth for forest scenes.

The laws of certain cities prohibit the use of curtains in schools, on account of the fear of fire. Other schools cannot afford a curtain large enough for their auditorium. This makes things very awkward for plays demanding a change of scene. Of course the lights can be turned off in some schools, and the scenery changed in semi-darkness; but there are schools where even this advantage cannot be had. For those who find themselves in a curtain predicament the following is suggested. Have six scenery pages, boys or girls as nearly of one height as possible. Let them wear a dark color, or colors, and be sure their shoes and stockings are black. Have couch-covers, portières, or strips of cloth fastened to curtain rods. Let the pages pass quickly to the front of the stage as soon as the scene closes, holding these improvised screens between changing scene and audience till the scenery is moved, thus:



For a church scene have dark-colored hangings. An offertory table with a long straight centerpiece of white, candles at either end, and in the center.

Be careful of your stage furnishing. It can do much to make or mar a play. See that your chairs and table are of the period described in the text. If your play is Greek, study the lines of Greek benches or seats. You can have them made very inexpensively, and painted white. Never, under any circumstances, use modern furniture in Greek plays.

For your interior scenes, if your play is laid in early Saxon times, in the days of Robin Hood, or the Pilgrim Fathers, in fact in any century up to the eighteenth, you are safe in using heavy black mission furniture with upright chairs and plain tables. The mission furniture may not fit the period in detail, but it is unobtrusive, has simple lines and the massiveness of the early furniture. *Never* use bright-colored furniture unless so directed in the text of the play.

Use ornaments very sparingly, unless called for. They clutter your scene. Remember that tablecloths, white or silken, were not in general use till the eighteenth century. Even then they were used for meals, not for the tables in drawing-rooms or libraries. These were polished and bare. Do not use "tidies" or "throws" unless your scene is laid in America at the time of the Civil War, or unless you wish to suggest an old-fashioned farmhouse interior. Do not use cushions of variegated colors unless your scene is Japanese. Too many bright and varied colors distract the

eye. Use dim, quiet colors. In fact, have the same taste in your scenes that you would in household decoration. Choose your accessories with reference to the color of your background. Try to work out your scene-setting in one or two quiet colors. It is the actors, not the scene, that you wish to bring before the eye of the audience.

Have as little furniture on the stage as possible. Use a floor-cloth, or if this is not obtainable, a bare floor, with or without a fur rug. Do not put a leopard skin in the home of a Danish peasant, as one amateur producer did. Beware how you use Persian rugs. Few amateur plays are laid in Persia. Above all, beware of brightly-colored strips of carpet, unless you wish your scene to be comic or grotesque.

An eighteenth-century interior may be light in color. Have spindle-legged furniture, cretonne hangings, and soft-colored cushions. With this century came in lacquered tables and trays.

*Never, unless your scene-setting actually requires it, set a scene in a pink or red room. It will kill the color of most of your costumes. "Ah!" cries some unfortunate producer, "what if you are in a little town where the only interior scene is red? What are you going to do?" In this case use black or dark furniture, and try to offset it. If you are in a place where you must choose between a red dining-room set, or a "parlor" set ornate with gold and bright wall-paper, when what you need is the interior of a peasant's home, turn your scenery inside out. The white back and the wooden*



props will look like a crude, whitewashed home. If the back is only a little yellowish, or dirty, you are saved. If you are allowed to tack brown wall-paper (plain) to the back of the set, you can make an excellent peasant hut out of it, or an interior that will do for a Puritan living-room, or eighteenth-century kitchen.

See that the color of your hangings or scenery are the same in gaslight and in daylight. Artificial light has a way of making green look blue and blue look green. Be especially careful to see that the dark green of your forest scene is not black at night. "Look before you leap," might be transposed to "Look before you buy." Take care of your scenery and details, and much of your play will take care of itself.

For scenery study the pictures in Guizot's *France*, and the *Jeanne D'Arc* pictures by Boutet de Monvel; also the interiors shown in illustrated editions of *Pilgrim's Progress*. For the interior of foreign peasant homes, and scraps of scenery, try *Little Pilgrimages Amongst English Inns*, by Josephine Tozier; *Little Pilgrimages Amongst French Inns*, by Charles Gibson. Some of the backgrounds in the illustrated editions of Lang's *Fairy-tales*. Also *Little Pilgrimages Amongst Bavarian Inns*, by Frank R. Fraprie.

## VII

# PROPERTIES AND HOW TO MAKE THEM

USE care in the selection of your properties. Study your text. Avoid anachronisms. Do not use muskets and pipes in a scene that is laid before muskets were invented and tobacco discovered. Do not use modern lamps to light a medieval scene. Do not use modern musical instruments in a scene that is laid in Grecian or medieval times. These are some of the average mistakes. Remember that penholders and pens are a modern invention. Use quill pens and sand for plays whose scenes are laid before the early nineteenth century. Do not use clocks in Greek or early Saxon scenes. If your characters are writing or sending letters in the times when parchment was used, have the paper yellowed to look like parchment. Do not have a modern fireplace in a peasant's home where the hearth would naturally be built of stone. Do not use modern dishes in medieval scenes. Buy paper plates and cover them with colored tissue paper, or paint them till they resemble the kind of platters you need. Brown will represent earthenware. Gold and silver for fairy palaces can be made by gilding them or cover-

ing them with gold paper. Remember that forks and spoons were not in popular use in the days of Robin Hood. Fingers and knives did the required work. The hearth was used for cooking. Beware of modern-looking cooking utensils in fairy, Puritan, or Colonial scenes. "Gadzooks" and modern coffee-pots do not go together. Beware of modern frying-pans for hearth-stone scenes. Use iron skillets instead. A kettle for these scenes is always permissible; but if it is a peasant scene, see that it is not the too-shining brass of the tea-kettle of the afternoon tea-table! Remember that coal fires are modern. If you are having a fairy-peasant scene use wood instead. Use braziers where the scenes require it. They are always effective, and can be made by blacking a tripod washbowl, and lighting a little red-fire powder in it, or some joss-sticks which will give a thin blue smoke. Or a red electric bulb can be used in it, if there is no spot-light.

Be careful of your lighting. The Greeks had torches when they wanted a bright light, and small, bowl-shaped lamps with a wick and oil for smaller illuminations. Gold cardboard torches from which stream slashed strips of flame-colored tissue paper is a safe substitute. The Saxons and early English had rush-lights and bowl-lamps. A bowl that looks like earthenware, with the stub of a candle in it, will do. In medieval times swinging lamps and candles were for the rich; while the humble were content with tallow dips only.


Don't use the spinning-wheel before the spinning-

wheel was invented, just because it is decorative. Don't use a modern glass "tumbler" for your doublet-and-hose hero to drink from. A cheap glass goblet covered with gold paper will look like a gold goblet.

If possible have your youthful players make their own properties. Take, for instance, a fallen tree-trunk, or a log for a forest scene. It can be made by fastening together two small vinegar barrels, and covering them with green and brown burlap to represent bark and moss. Or it can be covered with brown burlap and gray lichen—*real* lichen fastened to it with strong glue. Such a stage property as this can be used again and again. And the boy who went to the fields or the outlying suburb to get the moss—may he not gain something of nature's secrets that he had not known before? And may not the eager quest bring him hours of entire happiness? A seventeenth-century broom can be made by tying an armful of hazel or willow switches to an old broom-handle. The browner and sturdier these twigs are the better. This broom material can be gathered at the same time as the moss.

Stimulate initiative and invention wherever possible. A round brown collar-box is only a collar-box till you use it for an earthen bowl. A white cardboard shoe-box is cut down a little, covered with black tissue paper, has a little yellow pane inserted in each side, and a curtain ring for a handle. Behold a lantern for a Yankee Minute Man, or Paul Revere, or anyone else who wants to use it!

Remarkable stage furniture can be made from wooden boxes of all sizes. A packing-case makes a daïs. Several boxes nailed together and stained brown will make a peasant's cupboard.

Three boxes nailed together like this  will make a hearth. If it is to be a medieval or fairy-tale hearth, cover it with cheap gray cambric, bulked to look like stone, and marked like stone with splotches of white and brown chalk. Be sure you turn the *unglazed* side of the cambric outward. Use chalk because paint does not show up well on cambric. A brick fireplace for a modern scene can be made in the same way, covering the boxes with brick chimney paper that can be bought at Dennison's Tissue Paper Co., Boston, Chicago, or New York. One of their catalogues will prove invaluable to directors living in the country. A narrow box on rockers, stained brown, becomes a Puritan or eighteenth-century cradle. Gilded and hooded, it is the cradle of a royal princess. Couch-seats can be made from boxes, only be sure that they are secure.

Books which contain pictures from which properties can be copied are: The illustrated edition of Guizot's *France*, the pictures in Boutet de Monvel's *Jeanne D'Arc*, some of the castle and peasant interiors in the Fairy Books edited by Andrew Lang. Also *The Old Furniture Book*, by N. Hudson Moore, and *Chats on Old Furniture*, by Arthur Hayden. Also *Furniture of the Olden Time*, by Frances Clay Morse. *Home Life in Colonial Days*, by Alice Morse Earl. *Social Life*

*Under the Georges*, by Esther Singleton. For styles in dishes see *By-Paths in Collecting*, by Virginia Robie. (This illustrates mostly eighteenth-century dishes.)  
*Chats on English Earthenware*, by Arthur Hayden.  
*The Old China Book*, by N. Hudson Moore.

## VIII

### MUSIC AND DANCES

THE music and dances which sometimes are used in children's plays are usually indicated in the text, but there are occasions when dramatic directors or teachers find themselves in need of further help. A good rule for dances is to know the dates when they were invented, and when they proved most popular. Do not have your characters dancing a minuet in hoop-skirts, as one amateur producer was known to do. The Galliard, the Couranto, and the Levanto came in with the Masque in England, the Morris Dances even earlier. The Minuet and Pavane were of French origin. In music try to avoid anachronisms. If your play is laid in Shakespeare's time, use the old melodies "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," etc. Do not use patriotic airs before those airs were written. For instance, "The Star-Spangled Banner" should not be used in Colonial scenes. Do not use Civil War songs in Colonial times, as has been blandly done by some who felt they had no time to look the others up. Get a good musical dictionary and it will help you greatly. Try to have your music, either overture, entr'acte, or dance, give the *feeling* of a scene. Always begin your

rehearsals with the same music you will use throughout. It is fatal to change. If you are to rehearse with a piano first, and have an orchestra for your play, or a trio, *see at the beginning* that what is arranged for piano is also arranged for orchestra, and that all the parts for the orchestra are on hand. If they are sent for at the last minute the music store may be out of them, there will be another delay, and chaos will be the result.

Avoid cheap and trashy music. It will pull down the whole effect of your play. If you feel you *must* use a modern march or waltz, take one whose title is not well known—even if the waltz prove a little less catchy than the one in mind. For instance, if your fairies enter to “The Merry Widow Waltz,” or your dwarfs march in to “Hands Across the Sea” you have called up an entirely different effect from the one you wished to produce, and spoiled your play. Take less well-known compositions if you will use that type of music. But it is well to avoid it altogether, and in its place substitute the compositions of Dvorak, MacDowell, Gilbert, Nevin, Grieg, and Mendelssohn.

For dances, in giving diagrams and examining their technique, the following books will be found valuable:

*The Dance: Its History.* By Troy and Margaret Kinney.

*The Guild of Play Books.* Edited by Curwen, London. (Dances and Music.)



*The Folk Dance Book.* By C. Ward Crampton.  
(Dances and Music.)

*Swedish Folk Dances.* By Nils W. Bergquist.  
(Music and Dances.)

*Folk Dances and Singing Games.* By Elizabeth Burchenal. (Music and Songs.)

*The Gilbert Dances*, edited by Susan Hoffman Gilman, and published by Schirmer, will be found good for minuets, gavottes, and pavaues.

For simple plays given in the lower grades, for very little children, the following books have little musical motifs and dances that are easy and available.

*School Dances*, by Melvin Ballou Gilbert. (With full directions.) Edited by Susan Hoffman Gilman. There are eighteen dances in this book and their titles will at once suggest the kind of play they should be used for. Grade One, Grade Two, and Grade Three are the book's subdivisions, and these numbers fit the grades of the public school.

*Legends of the Red Men*, by Harvey Worthington Loomis, are good for Indian dances, and lend themselves also to Indian ceremonial and pantomime.

*Dramatic Games and Dances*, by Caroline Crawford, are good for younger children in everyday plays.

For fairy dances use Dvorak's *Humoresque* and Nevin's *Narcissus*, and the Pizzicato Polka from the Ballet *Sylvia*. The Folk Dances have already been indicated. *In the Hall of the Mountain King*, by Grieg, from *The Peer Gynt Suite*, is splendid for gnomes, and

goblin dances or entrances. Edward German's *Suite of Henry Eighth Dances* are good for medieval plays, and for morality plays. *Idyllo*, by Theodore Lack, will be found adaptable for the entrance or dance music of dryads or spirits. MacDowell's *From an Indian Lodge* has the color and weird beauty for an Indian scene. For an orchestra *The Mother Goose Suite*, by Ravel, has four selections, any one of which would make a children's overture.

## IX

# PLAYS FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO GRADE

### KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE \*

*Harper's Book of Little Plays* will be found useful because they are exceedingly simple and short and can be given without special costumes. They are good as exercises for beginners.

THE PAGEANT OF TREES, by William Morris. To be found in any complete collection of his poems. All the scholars can take part in this, several of the trees being spokesmen. The cast can run from ten to twenty. No special costumes required. If possible, all the children should carry tree branches. This is a good interlude for the spring or Arbor Day. As it only plays five minutes it should be used with a longer play.

*When Mother Lets Us Act.* (Published by Moffat, Yard and Co., New York.) This is a book that contains many suggestions and ideas that could readily be prepared by teachers.

\* Climax not such an essential here as in plays for older children.

## LIST OF PLAYS

## SECOND GRADE \*

BABY NEW YEAR, AN EPISODE. From *Brownikins and Other Plays*. (Published by Frederick A. Stokes Co., New York.) See Chapter XI, Plays for Special Holidays.

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE ANTS, from *The Dramatic Festival*. (Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.) There are twelve or more characters. It can be given by a cast of all girls, all boys, or boys and girls. No scenery or special costumes required, but can be used if wished. Plays half an hour. Is good for schoolroom use. Can also be given outdoors. *Is very serviceable for country schools.*

THE MOON'S SILVER CLOAK, from *Children's Classics in Dramatic Form*. (Published by Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.) Half a dozen characters. Lasts eight to ten minutes. Can be given without special costumes or scenery by a cast of boys and girls. Also in the same volume THE HONEST WOODMAN, founded on Æsop's *Mercury and the Woodman*.

## THIRD GRADE

BEARSKIN, a fairy play, from *Little Plays for Little People*. (Published by Hodder and Stoughton, New York.) A one-act play with five characters, boys and

\* Climax not such an essential here as in plays for older children.

girls. Interior scene. Requires simple costumes to be effective. Plays fifteen minutes.

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN, from *The House of the Heart*. (Published by Henry Holt and Co., New York.) An outdoor play which can readily be given indoors. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

THE FARMER AND HIS SONS, a fable play from *Children's Classics in Dramatic Form*. Book Two. (Houghton Mifflin Co.) Half a dozen characters, boys and girls. Can be given without special scenery or costumes. Plays ten minutes.

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE ANTS. See Second Grade.

THE MAGIC WOOD, a fairy play, in *Little Plays for Little People*. (Hodder and Stoughton.) Six characters, boys and girls. Plays twenty minutes. Interior scene, but difficult setting. Costumes rather elaborate. Might be given in the Ben Greet manner.

#### FOURTH GRADE

BEARSKIN. See Third Grade.

HOW THE INDIANS PLANTED POWDER, from *Plays of Colonial Days*. (Published by Longmans, Green, and Co., New York.) An outdoor play that can be given indoors. See Plays for Boys, Chapter XIV.

KING ALFRED AND THE CAKES, from *Little Plays*, by Lena Dalkeith, in *Children's Hour Series*. Has four characters, boys and girls. It plays about half an hour, and while possible for the Fourth Grade, will require study. Saxon costumes, easily fashioned. Interior scene.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Now in use in the schools. Very easy to give. See Chapter XI, Plays for Special Holidays.

PRINCESS TENDERHEART, from *Little Plays for Little People*. (Hodder and Stoughton.) Interior scene. Two acts. Seven characters, boys and girls. Plays thirty-five minutes. Not so difficult as pictures of costumes would lead one to suppose.

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

THE GOOSEHERD AND THE GOBLIN, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Outdoor play that can be given indoors very easily. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

THE PRINCESS AND THE PIXIES, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) One-act fairy play now in use in the schools. Cast of boys and girls, ten in all. Interior scene. Very easy to give. Plays eighteen to twenty minutes.

THE SONG IN THE HEART, from *Little Classics in Dramatic Form*, Book Three. (Houghton Mifflin Co.) This is a little play based on Grimm's fairy tale of *The Three Spinners*. Cast of boys and girls, and can be given without special scenery or costumes if so desired.

#### FIFTH GRADE

A LITTLE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Twelve characters, boys and girls. Interior scene. Puritan costumes. In use in the schools. Can be given as a Thanksgiving play.

LITTLE MEN. Dramatized by Elizabeth Lincoln Gould from Louisa Alcott's story. Two acts. Interior. Modern setting. Everyday clothes. Very easy to give. Ten characters, six boys and four girls. Plays about forty minutes.

LITTLE WOMEN. Dramatized by Elizabeth Lincoln Gould from Miss Alcott's story. Delightful play for six boys and four girls. Two acts. Modern setting. Plays about forty-five minutes. Modern costumes, or costumes of Civil War time.

NIMBLEWIT AND FINGERKIN, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A fairy play in one act. Nine characters, boys and girls. Can be increased to fourteen characters, if desired. Can

be given by a cast of girls. Easy scene-settings and costumes. Widely used in schools and settlements. Plays twenty-five minutes, or a little less.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XI, Plays for Special Holidays.

THE PAGEANT OF HOURS, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

PERSEPHONE, from *Children's Classics in Dramatic Form*, Book Four. (Houghton Mifflin Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

PRINCESS TENDERHEART. See Fourth Grade.

THE FAIRY CHANGELING. (Published by Richard Badger, Boston.) See Chapter X, Plays, Pageants, and Operettas for whole schools.

THE THREE WISHES, from *The Silver Thread*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Interior scene. Two boys and one girl. Plays fifteen to eighteen minutes. First produced by the University Settlement, New York City.

#### SIXTH GRADE

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, RAILSPLITTER, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XI, Plays for Special Holidays.



A BREWING OF BRAINS, from *The Silver Thread*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A one-act folk play. Can be acted by boys and girls, or all girls. Three characters. Interior scene. Easy to give. Plays fifteen to eighteen minutes. First produced by People's Institute, New York.

KING COPHETUA, from *Little Plays for Little People*. (Hodder and Stoughton.) Twelve or more characters, boys and girls. Interior scene. Two acts. Plays half an hour.

PERSEPHONE. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

ROBIN HOOD, by Lena Dalkeith, from *Children's Hour Series*. Scenes from Robin Hood. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

THE CHRISTMAS GUEST, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XI, Plays for Special Holidays.

THE FOREST SPRING, from *The Silver Thread*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

THE THREE WISHES. See Fifth Grade.

#### SEVENTH GRADE

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, JOURNEYMAN, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.)

A one-act play. Interior scene. Three boys. Two girls. Simple Colonial costumes. Plays half an hour.

DANIEL BOONE. *See* Chapter XIV, Plays for Boys.

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FORTUNE. *See* Chapter XIV, Plays for Boys.

HIDING THE REGICIDES, from *Little Plays from American History*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Nineteen characters, boys and girls. Seven scenes. Six indoor and one outdoor. Suited to school auditoriums. Has been played in private schools. Plays about an hour and ten minutes, including short waits to change scenes.

LITTLE BRIDGET, a fairy play, from *Six Fairy Plays for Children*. (John Lane Co.) Charming play founded on William Allingham's poem. Indoor setting. Ten characters, boys and girls, or all girls. One hour in length.

ROBIN HOOD. *See* Sixth Grade.

THE BOSTON TEA PARTY. *See* Chapter XIV, Plays for Boys.

THE MISTAKE AT THE MANOR, from *Short Plays About Famous Authors*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Six characters, boys and girls. Could be given by a cast of all boys. Interior scene. Simple eighteenth century costumes. Plays about forty minutes. Has been produced by the Clinton High School, New York.

THE HOUSE OF THE HEART, from the volume of that name. (Henry Holt and Co.) A morality play. Twelve characters, boys and girls, or all girls. Draped interior. Simple quaint costumes. First produced at Educational Theater, New York City. Then at Fine Arts Theater, Chicago, Ill. Prize play of the Educational Dramatic League, New York City, etc., etc. Plays an hour.

THE SNOW QUEEN, by Leonora Loveman. Fairy play in four acts. Boys and girls. Ten characters. Plays two hours. Fairy and peasant costumes. (Royalty to be paid for each performance.)

THE WONDERFUL ROSE, from *Six Fairy Plays for Children*. (John Lane Co.) Four characters, boys and girls. Plays over half an hour. Interior scene. Good characterization.

#### EIGHTH GRADE

ALLISON'S LAD, from the volume of that name. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XIV, Plays for Boys.

A BREWING OF BRAINS. See Sixth Grade.

A POT OF BROTH. Celtic folk play in one act, by William Butler Yeats. Three characters, two boys and one girl. Interior scene. Whimsical and poetic. Plays twenty-five minutes.

A CHRISTMAS EVE WITH CHARLES DICKENS. *See* Chapter XI, Special Holiday Plays.

A CHRISTMAS PARTY, from *Festival Plays*. *See* Chapter XI, Special Holiday Plays.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, JOURNEYMAN. *See* Seventh Grade.

FORTUNATUS AND CASSANDRA, from *Little Plays for Little People*. A classical play in three acts, requiring Greek costumes. Twelve or more characters, boys and girls. Plays three-quarters of an hour. Better for school auditorium than for schoolroom.

HIDING THE REGICIDES. *See* Seventh Grade.

MISS BURNEY AT COURT, from *Short Plays About Famous Authors*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A one-act play suitable for the eighth grade and high school. Six characters, boys and girls. Eighteenth-century costumes. Interior scene. Can be given in schoolroom. Plays half an hour.

MRS. MURRAY'S DINNER PARTY, from *Little Plays from American History*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Three-act play with one interior scene throughout. Easily managed. Fifteen characters, boys and girls. Colonial costumes. Plays about an hour and ten minutes.

PRISCILLA, MYLES, AND JOHN, from *Holiday Plays*. (Duffield and Co.) Tells in dramatic form of the courting of Myles Standish. Interior scene. Four characters, two boys and two girls. Pilgrim costumes. Easy to give. Plays three-quarters of an hour. Widely used.

SCENES FORM THE LIFE OF LINCOLN, from *Little Plays from American History*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XI, Special Holiday Plays.

THE BOSTON TEA PARTY, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. See Chapter XIV, Plays for Boys.

THE FOAM MAIDEN, from *The Silver Thread and Other Plays*. (Henry Holt and Co.) One-act play. Simple interior scene. Three characters, a boy and two girls. Plays twenty minutes. Very easy to give.

THE FAIRIES' PLEA, from *Short Plays About Famous Authors*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays and Pageants.

THE HOUSE OF THE HEART. See Seventh Grade.

THE HUNDREDTH TRICK. See Chapter XIV, Plays for Boys.

THE LITTLE KING. By Witter Bynner. An historical play in one act, dealing with the son of Marie

Antoinette. Boys and girls. Five characters. Plays half an hour. Has been produced in settlements.

THE MISTAKE AT THE MANOR. *See* Seventh Grade.

THE MAID OF ORLEANS (based on authentic records), from *Little Classics in Dramatic Form*. (Houghton Mifflin Co.) A simple, clear, historical play suited to the school auditorium, and involving a thorough study of the language, costumes, and customs of the time. Cast of twenty-five boys and girls. Well worth doing. Costumes to be copied after Boutet de Monvel's *Jeanne D'Arc*.

THE SNARE AND THE FOWLER. *See* Chapter XIV, Plays for Boys.

WHEN HEINE WAS TWENTY-ONE. From *Short Plays about Famous Authors*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A one-act play. Interior scene. Eight characters. Good for the eighth grade and high school. Boys and girls can act it easily. Simple costumes. Could be given in schoolroom. Plays less than an hour.

THE PAGEANT OF MONTHS, by Christina Rossetti, can be found in any complete collection of her poems. It has fourteen characters, boys and girls. Requires special but inexpensive costumes. One interior scene. Plays half an hour. A complete analysis of this play

is to be found in the present volume. Austin Dobson's *Vignettes in Verse* are suited to school auditoriums. They can be given by a cast of six girls alternating for the different parts. They require a better stage than the ordinary schoolroom because they should have eighteenth-century screens—or cretonne screens—for a background, and the costumes should be as good an imitation of Watteau as possible.

## X

### PLAYS, PAGEANTS, AND OPERETTAS IN WHICH THE WHOLE SCHOOL MAY PARTICIPATE

ELSA AND THE TROLLS. By Helen Shipton. Elaborate indoor scene, suited to a children's theater, or an exceptionally well equipped school auditorium. Twenty-one characters, boys and girls, ages twelve to fifteen. Also in the same volume *The Babes in the Wood*, four acts, twenty-two characters, boys and girls. Very elaborate. Suited to a children's theater or well-equipped school auditorium.

SNOW WHITE. The Winthrop Ames edition with music by Edmund Rickert. (Dodd, Mead and Co.) A fairy play. This is the version acted at the Little Theater, New York. The acting rights are held by Mr. Winthrop Ames. Permission to use it must be obtained from him. Address The Little Theater, New York City. Twenty-one or more characters, a cast of boys and girls. Indoor and outdoor scenes. The ages of the players range from nine to fifteen. It plays two and a half hours. Absolutely delightful.



THE FAIRY CHANGELING. (Richard G. Badger.) Also found in *St. Nicholas Book of Plays*. A charming fanciful fairy operetta with thirty-five characters, boys and girls, in ages ranging from nine to fifteen. Gilbertian humor. Pretty costumes, with directions for making them. Airs and choruses from Gilbert and Sullivan operas.

THE GREATEST GIFT, A MID-YEAR OF SPRING FESTIVAL. From *The Dramatic Festival*. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.) A charming festival or lyric play. Has one scene throughout, a forest glade. Cast of twenty-five or more boys and girls, or all girls. Ages six to fifteen. It could be given out of doors, but it is essentially an indoor play. The forest setting requires darkness and light to give the right effects. For an adequate production of this festival technical staging and lighting are required. Has dances and choruses and detailed descriptions of costumes. Excellent for a children's theater, and also fills the needs of girls' schools.

THE MAGIC CHEST. (E. P. Dutton and Co.) Interior scene. Twenty-four characters, boys and girls, or all girls. Ages eight to fifteen. Plays about an hour and a half.

THE PAGEANT OF PATRIOTS, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) An indoor pageant composed of episodes that can be used as separate plays. Nine scenes and a Prologue. The scenes are very simple. Some of them can be omitted or in-

cluded as desired and still leave the pageant coherent. From fifty to two hundred children can take part in it, ages six to eighteen. Boys and girls. Full description of music, costumes, and scene-setting is given. Good for whole schools and already used in them. Characters represented are Lincoln, Franklin, Washington, Captain John Smith, the Spirit of Patriotism, etc., etc.

THE PIED PIPER. Dramatized from Browning's story, and published by E. P. Dutton and Co. May be played indoors or out of doors. Cast of twenty-five or more characters, boys and girls, or all girls. Ages eight to fifteen. Music given and suggested. Suggestions for simple and effective costumes. Plays an hour and a half.

THE HAWTHORNE PAGEANT. A simple pageant that can be given indoors, if so desired. *See* Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

THE SILVER THREAD. From the volume of that name published by Henry Holt and Co. A Cornish folk play. Cast of thirty or more characters, boys and girls. Age of players ranges from nine to fifteen. Interior scenes. Three acts. Plays two hours. Full descriptions of costumes and scene-settings. Has been given in The Children's Theater, Cincinnati, and in settlements and public schools throughout the country. Used in the schools of Ohio for group reading. Has been produced in high schools, and under the auspices of the Drama League.

## XI

### SPECIAL HOLIDAY PLAYS

*For Christmas, New Year's, Thanksgiving, Washington's Birthday, Lincoln's Birthday, Patriots' Day, and Fourth of July.*

#### CHRISTMAS

A CHRISTMAS CAROL. Founded on Dickens' story. From *Children's Classics in Dramatic Form*. A play suitable for older boys and girls, advanced clubs in settlements, and for the eighth grade in the public schools. Boys and girls. A few younger children to play the parts of the little Cratchets. Good for a community in the country.

A CHRISTMAS EVE WITH CHARLES DICKENS, from *Short Plays about Great Authors*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A one-act play which includes a "dream" Christmas Masque. There are three boys and two girls in the play, and twenty-two boys and six girls in the Masque, for which a "dream gauze" curtain is required. Requires a school auditorium for adequate production, and elaborate costumes. Delightful play.

A CHRISTMAS PARTY, from *Festival Plays*. (Duffield and Co.) Interior scene. Thirteen characters,

boys and girls. The play is in one act and plays about an hour. Ages of players range from ten to fourteen years.

BABY NEW YEAR, AN EPISODE, from *Brownikins and Other Plays*. (Frederick A. Stokes Co.) A play for very little children. Appropriate for the second grade in the public schools. Interior scene. Three characters. Plays ten minutes.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, from *The House of the Heart and Other Plays for Children*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A play in one act. Very simple interior scene. Modern setting. Eleven characters, boys and girls. Plays twenty minutes.

THE CHRISTMAS GUEST, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A little miracle play in one act. Interior scene. Eight characters, boys and girls. Plays twenty minutes. Widely used.

See also *The Guild of Play Books* (Curwen's edition) for old English Merrymakings and dances; and Christmas suggestions to be found in *St. Nicholas Book of Plays and Operettas*.

#### WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FORTUNE, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) An outdoor play that can be given indoors with a little rearrangement. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

## LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, RAILSPLITTER, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) An historical play giving an accurate picture of Lincoln's boyhood. Simple interior scene. Ten characters, boys and girls. Ages ten to fourteen. The play contains an old-fashioned dance, and the costumes are very simple. Plays thirty-five minutes. Widely used.

SCENES FROM LINCOLN'S LIFE, from *Little Plays from American History*. (Henry Holt and Co.) These four scenes can be given as a short pageant play or as little separate one-act pieces. All the scenes are interior, but different. It will take a cast of forty boys and girls to give the whole play. Time: Forty-five minutes. Or the scenes themselves may be given as one-act pieces lasting ten minutes each. Scene 1 has nine characters. Scene 2 has six characters. Scene 3 has fourteen characters. Scene 4 has five characters, and at least half a dozen supers. Has been produced in private schools. Can be used in schoolroom or school auditorium. The third scene could be played on a veranda.

## THANKSGIVING

A LITTLE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter IX, Plays for the Public Schools, Fifth Grade.

PRISCILLA, MYLES, AND JOHN, from *Holiday Plays*. (Duffield and Co.) See Chapter IX, Plays for the Public Schools, Eighth Grade.

PILGRIM INTERLUDE, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) An outdoor play that has been used indoors. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

Also see Thanksgiving and Harvest festival suggestions in Percival Chubb's *Plays and Festivals*, published by Harpers. Other Thanksgiving suggestions may be found in *Folk Festivals and How to Give Them*, by Mary Needham. (Huebsch.)

#### PATRIOTS' DAY

MRS. MURRAY'S DINNER PARTY, a three-act play from *Little Plays from American History*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Also possible for Fourth of July if given indoors. See Chapter IX, Plays for the Public Schools, Eighth Grade.

THE BOSTON TEA PARTY, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XIV, Plays for Boys.

#### FOURTH OF JULY

THE HAWTHORNE PAGEANT, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) As Nathaniel Hawthorne was born on July 4, this pageant may be used as a celebration of his birthday if so desired, by a cast of all girls, or boys and girls. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

HIDING THE REGICIDES, from *Little Plays from American History*. (Henry Holt and Co.) This play could be given in a town hall or rustic theater. See Chapter IX, Plays for the Public Schools, Seventh Grade.

THE PAGEANT OF PATRIOTS, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A children's pageant in which whole schools, settlements, and communities may participate. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

UNCLE SAM'S BIRTHDAY PARTY, by Hazel Mackaye and Mrs. Glenna Smith Tinnin. Beautiful symbolic festival suitable for whole schools, settlements, and communities. It presents such well-known figures as Uncle Sam, Columbia, and the various States and their products. First produced as a civic Fourth of July Celebration in Washington, D. C., under the auspices of The Drama League. Simple and effective costumes. Dances and their music indicated. Thirty-five characters at the least, and from that up to one hundred. Boys and girls, ages twelve to fifteen and over. Splendid for city as well as country use. In manuscript form. Can be had from Miss Hazel Mackaye, Shirley Centre, Mass., upon payment of a moderate royalty.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN EPISODE, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FORTUNE, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

POCAHONTAS, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.



## XII

### OUTDOOR PLAYS AND PAGEANTS

*For Camps, Communities, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, etc.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN EPISODE, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A play for boys and girls. Twenty-five characters. Simple backwoods costumes, and Indian costumes. Ages of cast eight to fifteen. The episode, including two old-fashioned dances, lasts twenty-five minutes. Has been played a great deal.

A SON OF THE YEMASSE, from *Little Classics in Dramatic Form*. Book Four. (Houghton Mifflin Co.) It is based on William Seymour Gibbs' novel, *The Yemassee*. Is a fine play for boys. Requires Indian costumes. Has twenty-six characters, ages thirteen to fifteen and over. It is very dramatic, and though its ending is tragic, its story is tense and interesting, and it is a play that boys will like. It plays three-quarters of an hour.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN EPISODE, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A picturesque episode in two scenes. Forty characters in

simple costumes. Boys and girls. Ages range from eight to fourteen. Characters include Benjamin Franklin, Marie Antoinette, John Adams, etc. It plays forty minutes, and contains five dances, as well as full directions for staging, simple music, and inexpensive Colonial costumes. Used as a festival by settlements and schools.

DANIEL BOONE: PATRIOT, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) An historical play for boys with thirty or more characters. Plays half an hour. Contains a war-dance. Costumes Indian and scout. Characters range in age from eight to fifteen. A good play for Boy Scouts. Has already been used by them.

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FORTUNE, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A play founded on an incident of Washington's youth. Six characters, one girl and five boys. Ages eight to fourteen. Plays twenty minutes.

IN WITCHCRAFT DAYS, from The Hawthorne Pageant in *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Puritan play. Twenty or more characters, boys and girls, or all girls, their ages ranging from eight to fourteen or older. Plays half an hour. Has been used in girls' schools and by summer camps.

MERRYMOUNT. An historical episode from The Hawthorne Pageant in *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*.

(Henry Holt and Co.) Cast of twenty-five that may be increased to fifty. Boys and girls, or all girls. Simple, effective costumes. Play contains a May Pole Dance and Revel. Ages of players range from eight to fifteen and older. Has been used in summer camps and high schools.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM as edited by Ben Greet in *The Children's Shakespeare Series* will be found to be wonderfully adaptable for communities, camps, and summer schools. Can be given by a cast of twenty-five boys and girls, or a cast of all girls, at ages ranging from eight to fifteen. Also good for indoors. The stage directions are very complete.

MAGIC WOOD, from *Little Plays for Little People*. (Hodder and Stoughton.) A play that is really listed for indoors, but which makes a delightful outdoor play. Six characters, boys and girls. Ages seven to twelve. Easy costumes. Plays twenty-five minutes. And has two acts. Is a good play to give on a porch in a summer community, with the audience seated on the lawn.

THE FAIRIES' PLEA, from *Short Plays about Famous Authors*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A one-act play. Seven characters, boys and girls. Ten or more supers. Fairy costumes. Plays less than an hour. Good for May Day and Arbor Day.

THE HAWTHORNE PAGEANT, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A pageant

which can be given indoors or out of doors. Chorus, Prologue, Two Episodes, and an Interlude. Four or five dances. Simple costumes, with full directions for making them. Puritan and Cavalier dress. Fifty characters necessary to give it, and from that to two hundred can be used. Boys and girls, or all girls. *Is especially suited to a girls' camp.* First produced at the Wadleigh High School, New York City, as a celebration of Arbor Day. Then at Tyringham, Mass., as a celebration of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the town. Good for community as well as camp use. Used in girls' schools.

PERSEPHONE, from *Children's Classics in Dramatic Form*. Book Four. (Houghton Mifflin Co.) Twenty or more characters. Girls in ages ranging from eight to fourteen. Simple Grecian costumes. The right play for girls' camps and a spring festival. Plays three-quarters of an hour.

PILGRIM INTERLUDE, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) An Interlude with thirteen characters, boys and girls. Ages eight to fourteen. Plays half an hour. Contains chorus and an Indian dance. Costumes Pilgrim and Indian. Has been used by girls' clubs.

POCAHONTAS, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Historical play with thirty or more characters, boys and girls. Contains Indian

dances and ceremonies. Plays half an hour. Ages of players range from eight to fourteen or older. In use in settlements. Particularly appropriate for a camp. Also for use by Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls.

SIEGFRIED, from *The Silver Thread and Other Folk Plays*. (Henry Holt and Co.) An outdoor play in one act. From the German. Five characters, two girls and three boys. Or can be given by a cast of all girls. Very simple costumes. Ages eleven to fourteen. Has been used in girls' camps.

THE DREAM LADY, from *Six Fairy Plays for Children*. (John Lane Co.) A delightfully written one-act play which can be given by a cast of boys and girls, but which is better for a cast of girls. Sixteen characters, in age from ten to fourteen or older. Plays three-quarters of an hour. Produced at The Children's Theater in Cincinnati, and popular in settlements.

THE FOREST SPRING, from *The Silver Thread and Other Folk Plays*. (Henry Holt and Co.) An Italian folk play. Four characters, a boy and three girls. Or can be given by four girls. Ages ten to fourteen. Very simple costumes. Used where small casts are desired. Can also be given indoors.

THE ELF CHILD, from *The House of the Heart and Other Plays for Children*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A one-act play with twelve or more characters, boys

and girls, or all girls. Has been widely used. Characters from seven to thirteen years of age. Produced in many places under the auspices of the Junior Department of The Drama League.

THE GOOSEHERD AND THE GOBLIN, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A fairy play with eight characters, boys and girls. Easy fantastic costumes. Ages of players from eight to thirteen. Plays twenty minutes. Can also be given indoors.

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A garden play. Fifteen or more characters, boys and girls, or all girls. Ages six to twelve. Flower costumes. Plays twenty minutes. Contains a dance.

THE PAGEANT OF HOURS, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A very simple pageant in verse, with fourteen characters. Can be given by a cast of boys and girls, or all girls. Ages seven to twelve. Grecian costumes. Plays twenty minutes. Used in schools, and produced by the Junior Department of The Drama League.

THE PAGEANT OF PATRIOTS, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A pageant in which a whole community, school, or settlement may participate. (See Plays, Pageants, and Operettas for indoor version of this pageant.) It cannot be given

with less than one hundred and fifty children, unless only a few of the episodes are used. The best average runs from two hundred to five hundred players, boys and girls. There are eight episodes and a prologue, with full directions for costumes, properties, and dances. This pageant was first given in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, N. Y., by the ten Social Settlements of Brooklyn. It was the first children's pageant ever given in this country, and its characters represent scenes from the life of Lincoln, Captain John Smith, Washington, Franklin, etc., etc. It has been produced by schools and under the auspices of women's clubs and by children's theaters. Was used as The Safe and Sane Fourth Celebration for Boston, Mass. See article in *Outlook Magazine*, by Myra Emmons, July 2, 1911.

WHITE MAGIC, from *Six Fairy Plays for Children*. (John Lane Co.) A play that can equally well be given indoors or outdoors. One act, fifteen characters, boys and girls, or all girls. Ages ten to fourteen.

WILD ANIMAL PLAY, by Ernest Thompson Seton. (Doubleday, Page and Co.) Sixteen characters, boys and girls, ages eight to fourteen. Plays half an hour. Has all the characters made popular through Mr. Seton's books and teaches natural history at the same time that it interests its players. Especially good for camp. Could be given by a cast of boys, by making slight changes. In this case it would be admirable for Boy Scouts.

### XIII

## PLAYS FOR SETTLEMENTS

WIDE and varied are the uses of plays in settlements. Through them the members of the settlement clubs can be taught our language and respect for our flag. Yet too often do the young people come to think lightly of, or despise the simple art, the folklore, and the customs of their native land. The settlement that produces plays of these elder countries (the plays, of course, are acted in English) shows its young people the heritage they have brought with them, and should never forget. Moreover, it is a bond that draws young and old together: for fathers and mothers, seeing the native costumes and perhaps knowing the native legend, are able to grasp much of what goes on, and take an interest in it. It is often a tragically evident fact that the emigrant mother with no knowledge of English finds her children growing away from her. But with the production of an Italian play for Italians, or a Russian play for the Russians, the children are only too glad to consult their "sisters and their cousins and their aunts," not counting their mothers and their grandmothers. They ask about costumes. How did mother wear this or that in the old country? They



borrow trinkets or gay handkerchiefs. Churches and guilds in all our cities have this same problem to deal with. Therefore, in this particular compilation stress is put on the folk play. The strictly patriotic or ethical play can be found under other headings.

### ENGLISH FOLK PLAYS

A BREWING OF BRAINS. English folk play. *See* Chapter IX, Plays for the Public Schools, Sixth Grade.

THE SILVER THREAD. *See* Chapter X, Plays, Pageants, and Operettas for Whole Schools.

### FRENCH FOLK PLAYS

THE MAID OF ORLEANS. This is not a folk play pure and simple, but it does deal with French legend, "The Fairy Tree," as well as French history. *See* Chapter IX, Plays for the Public Schools, Eighth Grade.

THE THREE WISHES. *See* Chapter IX, Plays for the Public Schools, Fifth Grade.

SIEGFRIED. *See* Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

SNOW WHITE. *See* Chapter X, Plays for Whole Schools.

### IRISH

A POT OF BROTH. *See* Chapter IX, Plays for the Public Schools, Eighth Grade.

THE FOAM MAIDEN. *See* Chapter IX, Plays for the Public Schools, Eighth Grade.

THE TRAVELING MAN. A mystical religious play by Lady Gregory. An interior scene, very easy to give. Characters, a man, a woman, a little child. Two girls of fifteen could play the adult parts, a child of seven or eight the child's part.

THE LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE, by William Butler Yeats. A fairy play with about fifteen characters, some representing fairies. Can be given by girls of fourteen.

THE TWIG OF THORN, by Marie Josephine Warren. A delightful fairy play in two acts. Twenty characters. Simple picturesque costumes. Plays an hour and ten minutes. Is good for a girls' club.

#### ITALIAN

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE. A comedy from *The Dramatic Festival*. (Putnam's.) Italian costumes and setting. Eleven characters, boys and girls, or all girls. Very elaborate scenery, unless the scenery is imagined. Plays one hour. Excellent for older clubs in settlements, or for boys and girls of fifteen and fourteen. It needs cutting for the latter in order to make it run quickly.

THE FOREST SPRING. *See* Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

## NORWEGIAN

TROLL MAGIC. An outdoor play that can be given indoors. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

## RUSSIAN

MINKA'S WEDDING. This is a good play for boys and girls of fifteen, taken from *The Dramatic Festival*. (Putnam's.) A cast of all girls can also produce it. It has an interior scene in two acts, and distinct Russian atmosphere. The costumes, which are rather elaborate, are Russian throughout. Some of the longer speeches and songs, notably that of Ingor's Troop, will have to be cut by the dramatic director.

PETER THE GREAT'S SCHOOL, from *Children's Classics in Dramatic Form*. Book Four. (Houghton Mifflin Co.) This play can utilize a dozen to fifteen boys and girls of ten to twelve years of age. It has simple scenes, and the Russian costumes it requires can be easily fashioned. It plays fifteen minutes.

THE SNOW WITCH. A Russian folk play from *The Silver Thread and Other Folk Plays for Young People*. (Henry Holt and Co.) This is a play in one act, with a simple interior, and full directions for simple inexpensive costumes. Twelve characters, boys and girls, or it can be given by a cast of girls. It contains a folk dance, and plays half an hour.

## XIV

### PLAYS FOR BOYS

ALLISON'S LAD, from the volume of plays of that title. (Henry Holt and Co.) A one-act play suitable both for eighth grade and high schools. Simple interior scene. Seventeenth-century costumes and setting. Requires intelligent acting. Has been widely used by high schools and amateur dramatic clubs. Plays half an hour or a little over. The ages of the boys taking part should be at least fifteen to eighteen. Six characters.

DANIEL BOONE: PATRIOT, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

A SON OF THE YEMASSE, from *Little Classics in Dramatic Form*. Book Four. (Houghton Mifflin Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

HOW THE INDIANS PLANTED POWDER, from *Plays of Colonial Days*. (Longmans, Green, and Co.) Historical play. Five characters, ranging in age from ten

to thirteen years. Plays fifteen minutes. Indian costumes. Will interest boys.

THE BOSTON TEA PARTY, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A play for boys that is in wide use in the public schools, private schools such as Phillips Exeter, library centers, young people's theaters, and dramatic clubs. It is historically accurate, and has an easy interior setting and costumes, with full directions for making them. There are nine characters, boys of twelve to fifteen or over, and it plays half an hour or forty minutes, according to the length of the fencing bout which it contains.

THE HUNDREDTH TRICK, from *Allison's Lad and Other Martial Interludes*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Simple Elizabethan interior and costumes. Four characters. Has been acted by both amateurs and professionals. Requires the best powers of those taking part in it. Ages fifteen to eighteen at least. Plays thirty-five minutes.

THE SNARE AND THE FOWLER, from *Allison's Lad and Other Martial Interludes*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A one-act play in blank verse. Three characters. Simple interior scene. Or can be given with background of curtains. Costumes of the period of the French Revolution. Has been widely used by amateur dramatic clubs, high schools, settlements, and colleges.

The boys taking part should be at least from fifteen to eighteen years of age.

WILD ANIMAL PLAY, by Ernest Thompson Seton, is a play for boys and girls, but by rearranging some of it, it can be given by a cast of all boys. *See* Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

## XV

### PLAYS FOR GIRLS

PERSEPHONE, in *Children's Classics in Dramatic Form*. Book Four. (Houghton Mifflin Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

THE ELF CHILD, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) A garden play. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

THE DREAM LADY, from *Six Fairy Plays for Children*. (John Lane and Co.) A play that can be given indoors or outdoors, but which is particularly appropriate for the latter. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

THE HAWTHORNE PAGEANT, from *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. (Henry Holt and Co.) Can be given indoors or outdoors. See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

THE HOUSE OF THE HEART, from the volume with that title. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter IX, Plays for the Public Schools, Seventh Grade.

THE PAGEANT OF HOURS, from *The House of the Heart*. (Henry Holt and Co.) See Chapter XII, Outdoor Plays.

## XVI

### PLAYS FOR GROUP READINGS

THIS means plays that are read in the schools, without an attempt at acting. Each student is responsible for whatever character he or she assumes, and reads only that character's lines throughout the play. This is done as a study in English, as it has been found that children take a keen interest in this form of drama.

ADAM'S DREAM AND TWO OTHER MIRACLE PLAYS, by Alice Corbin. Suitable for third, fourth, and fifth grades.

SNOW WHITE, by Jessie Braham White. (The Winthrop Ames edition, Dodd, Mead and Co.) Suitable for fourth, fifth, and sixth grades.

THE BLUE BIRD, by Maurice Maeterlinck. Suitable for fifth, sixth, and seventh grades.

THE PAGEANT OF MONTHS, by Christina Rossetti. Suitable for fourth, fifth, and sixth grades.

THE SILVER THREAD, by Constance D'Arcy Mackay. (Henry Holt and Co.) Suitable for fifth, sixth, and seventh grades.



## XVII

### BOOKS THAT WILL BE OF HELP TO DRAMATIC DIRECTORS, TEACHERS, SOCIAL WORKERS

*Educational Dramatics*, by Emma Sheridan Fry.

*Folk Festivals and How to Give Them*, by Mary Masters Needham.

*Plays and Festivals*, by Percival Chubb and Associates.

*The Civic Theater*, by Percy MacKaye.

*The Dramatic Festival*, by Anne Throop Craig.

*The Festival Book* (May Day Past Time, and The May Pole), by Jeanette Lincoln.

*The Irish Theater*, by Lady Gregory.

*The Playhouse and the Play*, by Percy MacKaye.

*The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, by Jane Addams.



## SHORT PLAYS ABOUT FAMOUS AUTHORS (Goldsmith, Dickens, Heine, Fannie Burney, Shakespeare)

BY MAUDE MORRISON FRANK.

THE MISTAKE AT THE MANOR shows the fifteen-year-old Goldsmith in the midst of the humorous incident in his life which later formed the basis of "She Stoops to Conquer."

A CHRISTMAS EVE WITH CHARLES DICKENS reveals the author as a poor factory boy in a lodging-house, dreaming of an old-time family Christmas.

WHEN HEINE WAS TWENTY-ONE dramatizes the early disobedience of the author in writing poetry against his uncle's orders.

MISS BURNEY AT COURT deals with an interesting incident in the life of the author of "Evelina" when she was at the Court of George III.

THE FAIRIES' PLEA, which is an adaptation of Thomas Hood's poem, shows Shakespeare intervening to save the fairies from the scythe of Time.

Designed in general for young people near enough to the college age to feel an interest in the personal and human aspects of literature, but the last two could easily be handled by younger actors. They can successfully be given by groups or societies of young people without the aid of a professional coach.

## LITTLE PLAYS FROM AMERICAN HISTORY FOR YOUNG FOLKS

BY ALICE JOHNSTONE WALKER.

HIDING THE REGICIDES, a number of brief and stirring episodes, concerning the pursuit of Colonels Whalley and Goff by the officers of Charles II at New Haven in old colony days.

MRS. MURRAY'S DINNER PARTY, in three acts, is a lively comedy about a Patriot hostess and British Officers in Revolutionary Days.

SCENES FROM LINCOLN'S TIME; the martyred President does not himself appear. They cover Lincoln's helping a little girl with her trunk, women preparing lint for the wounded, a visit to the White House of an important delegation from New York, and of the mother of a soldier boy sentenced to death—and the coming of the army of liberation to the darkies.

The big events are touched upon, the mounting of all these little plays is simplicity itself, and they have stood the test of frequent school performance.

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HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY  
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# BOOKS ON AND OF SCHOOL PLAYS

By Constance D'Arcy Mackay

## HOW TO PRODUCE CHILDREN'S PLAYS

The author is a recognized authority on the production of plays and pageants in the public schools, and combines enthusiastic sympathy with sound, practical instructions. She tells both how to inspire and care for the young actor, how to make costumes, properties, scenery, where to find designs for them, what music to use, etc., etc. She prefaces it all with an interesting historical sketch of the plays-for-children movement, includes elaborate detailed analyses of performances of Browning's *Pied Piper* and Rosetti's *Pageant of the Months*, and concludes with numerous valuable analytical lists of plays for various grades and occasions.

## PATRIOTIC PLAYS AND PAGEANTS

PAGEANT OF PATRIOTISM (Outdoor and Indoor Versions):—  
\*Princess Pocahontas, Pilgrim Interlude, Ferry Farm Episode, \*George Washington's Fortune, \*Daniel Boone: Patriot, Benjamin Franklin Episode, Lincoln Episode, Final Tableau.

HAWTHORNE PAGEANT (for Outdoor or Indoor Production):—Chorus of Spirits of the Old Manse, Prologue by the Muse of Hawthorne, In Witchcraft Days, Dance Interlude, Merrymount, etc.

The portions marked with a star (\*) are one-act plays suitable for separate performance. There are full directions for simple costumes, scenes, and staging. 12mo.

## THE HOUSE OF THE HEART

Short plays in verse for children of fourteen or younger:—  
"The House of the Heart (Morality Play)"—"The Enchanted Garden" (Flower Play)—"A Little Pilgrim's Progress" (Morality Play)—"A Pageant of Hours" (To be given Out of Doors)—"On Christmas Eve." "The Princess and the Pixies." "The Christmas Guest" (Miracle Play.), etc.

"An addition to child drama which has been sorely needed."—*Boston Transcript*.

## THE SILVER THREAD

AND OTHER FOLK PLAYS. "The Silver Thread" (Cornish); "The Forest Spring" (Italian); "The Foam Maiden" (Celtic); "Troll Magic" (Norwegian); "The Three Wishes" (French); "A Brewing of Brains" (English); "Siegfried" (German); "The Snow Witch" (Russian).

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